



The Unitarian Universalist Church of Brunswick

The Reverend Sylvia Stocker, Minister
The Reverend J. Bradbury Mitchell, Minister Emeritus
Nicole Shanks, Director of Religious Education

July 18, 2011

Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
Green Sanctuary, Congregational Stewardship Services
25 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108

Greetings!

Please find enclosed our Application for Green Sanctuary Accreditation. Our congregation and Green Sanctuary Committee have worked on the program and projects for more than three years and have accomplished much.

As I am sure you know, a great deal has changed for us since our devastating church fire on June 6, 2011. Many of the physical improvements we made in our church building during the Green Sanctuary process, including in the Sanctuary and Community Room, have burned away. On the other hand, over the past three years our entire congregation has embraced the Green Sanctuary effort with programming and procedures that are still very much intact. These are clearly reflected in the application.

Because the application is a result of years of consistent, hard work by the Green Sanctuary Committee and ongoing commitment by the congregation, we have not edited the results of program and activities that may have been affected by fire losses, but submit the applications as completed when the fire struck. It accurately reports on the work accomplished and reflects the approach and dedication of our GS Committee and congregation.

Looking at the brightest side of the fire disaster and ongoing recovery efforts, we now have opportunities to include Green Sanctuary goals in building plans that we did not have before the fire. Our community is drawing together in the aftermath; our commitment to each other and our shared goals is growing ever stronger. Our Green Sanctuary Committee is an energetic and vital part of our vision of the future of the church. The spirit of Earth Care lives on here and will be a major influence as we move ahead with our recovery.

Our Green Sanctuary accomplishments, both physical and spiritual, are a direct result of the GS Committee's ongoing efforts. As a Board, we applaud them for their commitment and creativity. We also thank you for the clear guidance and structure of the UUA Green Sanctuary program in support our growth, and awareness of the Earth and all who live on it. Our Green Sanctuary application is in your hands.

Most sincerely,

Michael Heath, Chair
Board of Trustees

PS: Please note that UUCB's work with Habitat for Humanity/Seven Rivers' Step One Weatherization program was described with a photo of two teams in the recent UUA publication *Green Beyond Belief: the UUA President's report in response to the 2010 Green Revolution in Religion Business Resolution*.

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Green Sanctuary

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http://www.uua.org/documents/congservices/greensanctuary/accreditation_app.pdf

Application for Green Sanctuary Accreditation

June 30, 2011

Congregation Information

Congregation Name: UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF BRUNSWICK, MAINE (UUCB)

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Minister or Congregation Leader: the Rev. Sylvia Stocker

Congregation Profile

Our Church: UUCB's 199-year history in Brunswick included both Universalist and Unitarian congregations, now merged. We are a small but growing church currently with 170 members and a church school enrollment of 60. We are mostly white middle class, fairly well educated with a median age 52. We began holding two services in April 2009, with an average attendance of roughly 102 per non-holiday Sunday.

UUCB staff comprises a full-time minister, a 1/2 time director of religious education, a three-quarter time church administrator, a music coordinator, a choir accompanist, and a part-time sexton.

Our church leadership includes an active board of trustees, a church council, and various committees and task forces, of which the Green Sanctuary Committee is one of the newest.

Our current major issue is determining how to live our Mission Statement, adopted by unanimous vote in February 2009. Other ongoing issues reflect the problems many other churches face: We work hard to make the finances work and the budget balance, and we struggle to find enough volunteers for ongoing church work.

The Brunswick Area: The Brunswick area is distinguished by Bowdoin College (known for its successful efforts to become carbon neutral), the Brunswick Naval Air Station (recently closed and transferred to town ownership), the Bath Iron Works (shipyard in nearby Bath), LL Bean in nearby Freeport, and the Chewonki Foundation (a youth environmental education center and pioneer in alternative energy development in nearby Wiscasset). Our congregation has included people from all these employers.

The ethnic makeup of the Bath-Brunswick area is largely Scots/English and Franco-American with Irish-American and Jewish components. Racially, the area is at least 90 percent white. Our congregation is more than 99 percent white with members from the above and other ethnicities. The local population also includes many returning or new resident retirees.

The State of Maine: Environmentally, the state of Maine is distinguished by having the oldest and largest organic farmers and gardeners association in the country, by having a state university system known nationally for its LEED Platinum buildings and by Bowdoin College, an intentionally carbon neutral institution. Three feeder communities for our church, Bath, Topsham, and Brunswick are Sierra Club Cool Communities. A number of area churches have Sierra Club Earth Care teams, including our neighbor churches, St. Paul's Episcopal and First Parish Congregational. Both have Earth Care teams allied with our Green Sanctuary Committee for educational and event programming.

Our History of Social Action: As a Welcoming Congregation, we support referenda and state legislation around GLBTQ rights. For about ten years, our volunteers have supported the Tedford Homeless Shelter with a full meal for 20 a month. Our Women's Alliance recently held an Empty Bowl Supper to raise \$1000 for the shelter's new drop-in day center, founded by the Brunswick Interfaith Council. For many years, we have allowed AA and other support groups to meet in our buildings for a donation.

In 2005, the congregation supported the Maine Council of Churches Giving Winds program to lend 2 percent interest \$10,000 unsecured 5-year loans to a Maine Indian four-tribe development corporation to help them accumulate a cash pool to make home improvement loans and mortgages to reservation homeowners who cannot, for reasons of tribal land ownership and sovereignty, secure ordinary bank loans and mortgages. This was publicized in our church by a native American luncheon by the Women's Alliance; 10 members, including the Women's Alliance itself, matched one member's \$5000 contribution, lending \$10,000, which with UUA and federal BIA matches became \$40,000.

Since 2003, we share the non-pledge plate offering 50/50 with 12 "Charities with Soul" which change from year to year but focus on local, statewide and occasionally international charities with a Maine connection. In 2009, we began a small group

ministry program called Chalice Circles, which includes a community service component for each group. We are a covenant church with Habitat for Humanity 7 Rivers, and have provided teams of trained volunteers to their Step One Weatherization Program, held a concert to raise money for Habitat, and worked as individuals in new home builds and other volunteer work. Additionally, small groups and individual members within the church regularly perform social actions.

Green Sanctuary Committee: The UUCB Green Sanctuary Committee was initially formed as a task force to educate the congregation and the church leadership about Green Sanctuary. We did this over a three-month period with a formal 1-page action plan; talks with each committee; after-church informational sessions and films; a full color 3-fold brochure; a regular column in the church newsletter; a baseline survey of congregational environmental behaviors; interviewing members of church leadership on aspects of the church's Earth care; and holding a locavore supper with Green activities; and a ritual dedication of our new compost system. In this initial period, the church itself developed a mission statement: "Our mission is to be a spiritual community, to welcome all, to nurture one another, to work for justice, and to care for the Earth." We regarded the last line as a vote of confidence, and we call upon it frequently in pursuing our charge.

We design our Green Sanctuary activities mindful of two foci, based on the last line of our mission statement "...and to care for the Earth." One is to educate our church community about ways to redirect the present ongoing climatic disaster and to make a significant difference in the sustainability of our lives; the second is to expose us—particularly young families—to our natural surroundings and to help them celebrate the seasons and become at ease with the outdoors and other species.

Congregational Vote

At our June 12, 2011, all-congregation meeting, members of UUCB voted unanimously to endorse the Green Sanctuary program they've supported for the last three years and agreed that the following statement, paraphrased from Pachamama's slogan, was our mission as a church:

"As a Green Sanctuary, we are committed to bringing forth an environmentally sustainable, spiritually fulfilling, and socially just human presence on this planet."

Our Green Sanctuary Committee chair presented this as a commitment to continue Green Sanctuary programming, a follow-up on the congregational vote 3 years ago to apply for Green Sanctuary candidacy, and as a validation of the work and progress that has been made. **Note:** Minutes of the meeting are not yet available.

Completion of Action Plan

A. Worship and Celebration Projects

(2 required)

A1. Project Title: Locavore Suppers

Project Description and Action: To date, UUCB has held two locavore suppers, one celebrating the start of our program and to initiate the new composting/recycling system, the second to celebrate our acceptance for Green Sanctuary Candidacy. The goals of the suppers – which feature meals made of food from local sources – are to celebrate high points in our Green Sanctuary process, to keep Green Sanctuary ideas before the wider congregation, and to promote awareness and use of local food suppliers. The first locavore supper was prepared by the UUCB high school group from locally produced foods supplied by the congregation. The second locavore supper was prepared by individual members from a set menu, using locally grown/produced foods and traditional Maine recipes. Activities at both dinners included readings, songs and quizzes/games highlighting Earth Care attitudes.

Timeline for Completion: Biennial or when the spirit or the occasion demands.

Outcomes: The locavore suppers were enjoyed by the congregation and created a spirit of unity of purpose about caring for Earth. They also helped to raise awareness of the church's Green Kitchen policy (below). Locavore suppers are scheduled to continue biennially as part of our mission to "...care for the Earth." A flyer identifying sources of locally grown food was distributed to the congregation before each supper and the sources of the supper's ingredients were posted on a whiteboard during the meal. Although we had hoped to produce a pamphlet indicating local food sources, the Maine Department of Agriculture and the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association beat us to the draw with a comprehensive statewide publication. We have on occasion distributed copies of this through the congregation and made it available in the Community Room.

Lead: Connie Seidner, Robin Hansen, Sienna Dode and the entire Green Sanctuary Committee

A2. Project Title: Environmentally themed services

Project Description and Action: The project was designed to offer worship services that reflect nature and green living themes on an ongoing basis. UUCB held 11 Earth-based services in the 2010–2011 church years, and nearly as many in 2009–2010. Most were prepared by the Rev. Sylvia Stocker collaborating with the Worship Committee. Sample themes from this past year: "St. Francis of Assisi and the Modern World;" "Thank Heaven for Wild Birds;" "Lament of the Manatee;" "Solstice;" and "Tu B'shevat." A lay service led by Nancy Dorian effectively compared the endangerment of

species with the endangerment of dying languages and talked about ethical differences in conservation efforts.

Additionally, the Green Sanctuary Committee and its predecessor have led the Earth Day Service when Rev. Stocker was away on Earth Day Sunday. These lay-led services have included a CSA Sunday, where two local farmers presented information on CSAs and offered shares; a service by Rev. Stocker with readings by Green Sanctuary Committee members; a service by our interim minister Rev. David Farrington "Honoring Other Species," which featured (recorded) music by other species and a supporting art exhibition by member artists in the congregation; a global warming service with a lay sermon "The Boy Who Cried Wolf" by the Green Sanctuary chair and music by the choir and in-church musicians; and this year, a service "Life is a Dance," featuring a short, narrated play "We are dancing, O Best Beloved," with actors both rehearsed and randomly picked from the congregation, and homilies "Great Salt Marsh" by Minister Emeritus Brad Mitchell and on small sustainable communities "Dancing Exodus" by new committee member Ed Pontius.

Timeline for Completion: ongoing since October 2008

Outcomes: Though difficult to measure, we believe that environmentally themed worship services reinforce and validate the importance of the UU principle, "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part."

Lead: Rev. Sylvia Stocker, the Worship and Green Sanctuary Committees

B. Religious Education Projects

(2 required, 1 for children and 1 for adults)

B1. Project Title: Kids in Nature

Project Description and Action: Kids in Nature features enjoyable activities for and with our children in natural environments where the children are led to discover seasonal behaviors of other species. During their RE time, the children constructed bird houses and butterfly houses for the church's new butterfly garden. Two amateur insect collectors made presentations to the children on butterflies and their habits during RE time. (See Project E1.)

We also assist RE in carrying out field trips:

- two annual field trips to a sheep farm during lambing;
- a nature walk: at the sheep farm's forest and pond;
- a visit to a member's vernal pool to see salamanders in breeding season
- a visit to a nature preserve to observe pond life—frogs, frog eggs, pollywogs, sundew plants, and so forth.
- one intergenerational apple picking trip
- two annual apple processing days, where the kids helped make apple desserts, apple and pear cider, apple salads, etc.
- Upcoming trip to a tidal basin to observe inter-tidal life: periwinkles, crabs, seaweed, goose tongue, clams, etc.

In each case, the children (and adults) were accompanied by knowledgeable adults to instruct and caution the children and to protect the wildlife.

Timeline for Completion: Its first year corresponded with RE's trimester on the environment. The second year, there was no environmental trimester and activities were limited to three events—visit to the sheep farm, a saltwater tidal pool exploration and apple processing day.

Outcomes: These intergenerational events involved people from 9 months to 93 years old. The children loved to observe, discover and ask questions about what they were seeing in natural environments. They looked forward to these trips as a highlight of their church school year. We hope that the environmental trimester will be repeated, and that the field trips will continue every year.

Lead: Brad Mitchell as chair of the Kids in Nature Task Force working with the Director of Religious Education.

B2. Project Title: Women's Alliance Environmental Reading and Discussion

Project Description and Action: The purpose of the Women's Alliance Environmental Reading and Discussion was to engage older UUCB women in the Green Sanctuary effort through literature and sharing.

Timeline for Completion: May 2010.

Outcomes: Approximately 25 women, all over 55 years old, read and discussed *Leavings* by Wendell Berry and shared other works and poems. All engaged in a lively discussion. Most of these women might not have thought deeply about UUCB's movement to become a Green Sanctuary but for this reading and discussion. It illustrates how UUCB's Green Sanctuary program is reaching out to educate and engage a breadth of church members.

In 2010, we also had a speaker from Cornerstones of Science speak to the Alliance on protection of butterfly species and butterfly gardens, preparatory to putting in such a garden. (See Project E1.)

We hope to have at least one environmental Women's Alliance program every church year. (In 2011, we had a speaker from the Sierra Club on legislative action on sustainability and climate change mitigation, also arranged by Betty Wurtz.)

Lead: Betty Wurtz.

B3. Project Title: Community Film Series and Brunswick Interfaith Earth Care Alliance

Project Description and Action: UUCB's Green Sanctuary representative joined with Earth Care committees from the local UCC and Episcopal churches to form the Brunswick Interfaith Earth Care Alliance, to plan showings of environmentally-themed films, with relevant and powerful speakers to comment and do Q&A. Some of the titles were: *Renewal*, *A Chemical Reaction*, *Addicted to Plastics*, *Chimney Swifts*, *Community Gardens*, and *Rachel Carson: A Sense of Wonder*, and *King Corn*. The films were shown in our churches and at the Frontier Cinema and Gallery, a small theater known for good local food and environmentally attuned films. Each screening was accompanied by a relevant speaker (often the film's director or producer) with supporting materials and handouts available. The goal was to expose the greater Brunswick community with informative films on environmental issues.

In April 2011, BIECA organized an interfaith panel on the greening of congregations and churches with representatives from six Maine Earth-Care-sensitive churches and a local green products business. Member churches communicate their events with other churches so that all can take part in the events.

Timeline for Completion: Ongoing program

Outcomes: Audiences were respectably large. For instance, 80 people joined us for the showing of *A Chemical Reaction*. Paul Tukey, the film's director, spoke about making the film. Sixty to 80 people joined us for *Addicted to Plastics*. Forty people attended the showing of *Chimney Swifts*, and the film-maker was present. It was agreed by the

Brunswick Interfaith Earth Care Alliance that this was a successful series and they will continue to meet to plan community environmental education. We have found that we have better attendance with thorough community wide PR and with screenings NOT in a church.

Lead: 3-church committee. Our representative was 2008–2009, Hope Russell, 2009–2010 Sally Nealand; 2010-2011 Lynn Boyd, Robin Hansen

B4. Project Title: Green Sanctuary Footprint

Project Description and Action: With the goal of engaging the whole congregation in thinking about the natural world, environmental protection and species diversity, we produce “Green Sanctuary Footprint,” a regular column in *the UUCB Parish Messenger*, our monthly newsletter. Short essays (50–800 words) cover some aspect of the writer’s interaction with nature, the environment, or other species. This is written by any member of the congregation, but often by invited members.

Timeline for Completion: ongoing.

Outcomes: We have published in nearly every issue of the church newsletter for the last two years. (See attached sample by Esther Palmer, then LaCognata.) We reach not only congregants who read the newsletter but also, because each essay is written by a different member of the congregation, we make a deeper impact on the writers themselves who have a chance to reflect on some aspect of the natural world. We will continue this project and hope to expand it to teens as well as adults.

Lead: Coordinated by Robin Hansen.

C. Environmental Justice

(2 required, 1 long-term that

- actively promotes justice for those affected by environmental injustices and
- creates relationships)

C1. *Project Title: Habitat for Humanity Step One Weatherization — Long-term project*

Project Description and Action: UUCB is partnering with a community organization, Habitat for Humanity, in their Step One Weatherization program, designed to engage low-income families who apply to make their homes more heat-efficient at minimal cost. Four teams from UUCB (trained by Habitat) have worked on 2 to 3 homes each during October–November 2009 and 2010.

Timeline for Completion: Annually, September through November. We plan to continue as long as the program continues.

Outcomes: We have weatherized nearly two dozen homes so far, thus reducing the homes' carbon footprints while helping low income families to save money on heating bills. Feedback from Habitat for Humanity has been positive and we anticipate the project will continue. The format of the work was changed somewhat based on our recommendations. The UUCB- Habitat for Humanity covenant relationship is strengthened by this project.

Lead: The project is coordinated by Robin Hansen. Workers in 2009 and 2010 included Lynne Boyd, David and Wendy Roundy, Brad Mitchell, Anne Spencer, Hannah Trowbridge, Robin and Erik Hansen and exchange students Sara Sand, Philipp Soltau, Flemming Milke, and Johanna Lenhammar.

C2. *Project Title: Plant a Tree for Peace*

Project Description and Action: We distributed free tree seedlings at two annual Brunswick Peaceworks Fairs in order to raise awareness of the importance of reforestation to lessen desertification and increase carbon dioxide absorption.

Timeline for Completion: August 2008 and 2009.

Outcomes: We spoke with all seedling takers about the importance of reforestation to lessen desertification and increase carbon dioxide absorption — and to promote world peace through improving human habitat. We gave away 100 seedlings per year, one seedling per person. There was no possible follow-up, so the success of the project is unknown, although it gave us the chance to talk to members of the community about climate change and the favorable influence of planting trees.

Continuing: In 2010, feeling the audience for baby trees might be exhausted, we distributed buttons from UUMFE which said “Converted?” to Peace Fair-goers willing to tell us about ways they have lessened their energy use (or done other acts to make their lives more sustainable in the past year).

Lead: Betty and Connie Wurtz.

D. Sustainable Living

(4 required, 1 addressing energy conservation)

D1. Project Title: Cash for CLYNK-ers

Project Description and Action: The UUCB Development Committee set up a “CLYNK” account at our local Hannaford supermarket, that offers a program of crediting returnable bottles to an established account. The team acquired the bags with account-labels in quantity and made individual bags available to the congregation in a convenient pick-up basket in the Community Room. Church members took the bags, and used them to return their refundable bottles to the supermarket. The refunds were then credited to the church.

Green Sanctuary’s goal was to increase refundable bottle return among the congregation. The Development Committee’s goal was to raise money for the church.

Timeline for Completion: Ongoing.

Outcomes: After 18 months, the church has received over \$1000. Results are reported periodically in the monthly Parish Messenger, which we hope will increase participation in the program. We are unsure whether members return bottles more regularly than before, as there was no firm baseline.

Lead: Jim Michaud and Robert Seidner

D2. Project Title: Green Kitchen

Project Description and Action: After the UUCB Board of Trustees passed the Green Kitchen policy, we posted “Green Kitchen” practices on kitchen wall as well as signs directing kitchen users to dispose of waste products responsibly – including recycling, composting, and returning bottles for refund. We sent letters to renters of church facilities asking them to respect our new Green Kitchen practices. We switched to use of paper products (e.g., paper towels) made from recycled paper only, ceramic cups (no paper or Styrofoam), cloth tablecloths and cloth napkins at church functions, and 100% natural soy hand soap. We established kitchen coordinators, who monitor kitchen use and gently urge compliance, and published an article in the church newsletter about “Green Kitchen” practices. Our goal is to encourage food preparation and service practices in the UUCB kitchen that conserve resources, minimize waste, and avoid toxic substances.

Consistent with the UUCB’s support of sustainable living practices and care of the Earth, it is UUCB’s policy to follow food preparation and service practices that conserve resources, avoid pollution, and minimize waste. This includes:

- returning and/or recycling containers;
- composting compostable waste;
- using only reusable dishes, glasses and flatware made of natural

materials (not plastic) in the church buildings and at church functions;

- using cloth tablecloths;
- using cloth napkins for formal and/or sit-down food service; Napkins made from recycled paper can be used for stand-up finger food service.

Procedures that promote this policy are prominently displayed in the kitchen.

Approved by UUCB Board of Trustees on August 24, 2010

Timeline for Completion: Ongoing.

Outcomes: This was probably the most visible project in our entire program, as it affected everyone. (See “Program Evaluation” at the end of this application.)

It took some time and several revisions of the signs to get people accustomed to disposing of waste in responsible ways. There was some dissent among congregants about the cloth napkin practice. The policy passed by the Board specified that cloth napkins were to be used for sit-down table service, while paper napkins made of recycled paper could be used for stand-up finger foods.

There is a greater awareness among the congregation about food preparation and serving and clean-up practices that conserve resources and minimize waste.

Lead: Connie Seidner

D3. Project Title: Stop the Flood

Project Description and Action: The challenge of this project was to keep our basement Community Room from flooding during and/or after rain or snowmelt. We obtained proposals for how to deal with the problems from professional consultants. We installed rain gutters on the church building in connection with a new roof covering. Some rain water is being collected and used to water the butterfly garden.

Timeline for Completion: Ongoing, but some success in summer 2010 with new rain gutters and rain barrels.

Outcomes: The consultants’ proposals were cost-prohibitive and too invasive. We are currently developing a plan to drain water from the floor to a sump well for pumping out should the rain gutter prove not sufficiently effective. Our course of action allowed the plans for the butterfly garden to proceed (See Project E1, below.). Winter freezing was a major problem with the rain barrels; there is some discussion of installing the sort of heaters used in livestock waterers.

Lead: Erik Hansen and Properties Committee

D4. Project Title: Green Power

Project Description and Action: We want to purchase electrical power for the church buildings from a company that produces the power from non-fossil sources. We

identified available power sources/companies which provide clean power. We proposed to the church board to switch power provider to a company providing clean power, and the Board budgeted funds to allow for the projected higher cost.

Timeline for Completion: When clean power becomes available from our power company or Maine Interfaith Power & Light.

Outcomes: No progress has been made yet, because the current clean power provider in this area is oversubscribed at this time. We will keep looking.

Lead: Erik Hansen with the UUCB Properties committee.

D5. Project Title: Vegan Luncheons

Project Description and Action: Monthly luncheons featuring vegan food, open to all, have been held seven times since October 2010 in the UUCB Community Room. The aim is to engage the congregation and other members of the community in creating and enjoying delicious, healthy, and less resource-intensive meals. (On average, plant-based diets consume far less water, land, and energy and give off less atmospheric carbon than meat-based diets. [michaelbluejay.com/veg/environment.html].)

Attendees help with food preparation and food costs are shared equally. Although organized and run outside the Green Sanctuary Committee's purview, the luncheons promote the goals and attitudes of the Green Sanctuary program and hence were included here. (Two organizers are on the Green Sanctuary Committee.)

Timeline for Completion: Ongoing since October 2010.

Outcomes: An average 12 people attend the luncheons. Discussions have been lively. The program will continue. The vegan luncheons have also helped raise awareness of the church's Green Kitchen policy (see above).

Lead: Larry Lemmel and Brad Mitchell with assistance from Hope Russell.

Additional

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

E1. Project Title: The Butterfly Garden (This applies to B, Religious Education as well)

Project Description and Action: A 12ft by 5ft garden was planted in a sunny natural depression on the east side of the church to attract butterflies and beautify the church landscape. The building foundation has been screened by butterfly bushes. All plants were donated. A rain barrel with gravity flow is watering the area. The garden is transected by an S-shaped thyme path to form a number of areas where a great variety of plants can be displayed. We have added a small stone sand/water bath as recommended by a professional butterfly educator to aid reproduction of butterflies.

Timeline for Completion: Planted in 2010, maintained and expanded 2011.

Outcomes: Because all plants were donated, there are mystery plants and bi-annuals. There are no annuals. Some plants will be moved next summer when heights and colors are known. It looked nice the summer of 2010 as cosmos and a mystery flowering weed took over and filled many bare spaces. The project inspired a proposal to establish a church landscaping committee. (While this has not happened, a new member became volunteer landscaping manager in spring 2011.)

Lead: Ellie Swanson with help of the Women's Alliance, Green Sanctuary, and the RE program

E2. Project Title: Handmade Local Wreaths for Holiday Fair

Project Description and Action: We made 25 to 40 wreaths each year for three years with locally-raised balsam fir from a member's farm to sell at our holiday fair and to decorate the church. Our aim was to replace more environmentally harmful purchases of factory-made wreaths from China with local boughs from Maine. More than 40 members took part in various parts of the project, from tipping trees and making bows, ornaments, and the wreaths themselves to storing and selling the wreaths.

Timeline for Completion: Annual project in November–December.

Outcomes: We decreased carbon output by reducing transport (from China) and by eliminating disposal of non-recyclable waste (plastic greens) in the environment. Much earlier wreath sales involved purchase and transport of natural wreaths from eastern Maine—so transport, and hence carbon output, was also reduced in comparison to that practice. Furthermore, members of the congregation learned valuable skills (wreath-making, bow-making).

Lead: Robin and Erik Hansen.

Accomplishment of Program Goals

Describe, in detail, the degree to which you have achieved the each of the five Green Sanctuary Program goals with your program.

Goal: Build awareness of the significance and complexity of environmental issues

At the beginning of our process as a Green Sanctuary Task Force, we surveyed the congregation on its awareness of environmental issues. Out of approximately 100 family units, some 47 surveys were filled out and returned.

As a whole, the survey indicated that UUCB members and friends have a high degree of awareness of sustainable living challenges and behaviors and to a significant degree are practicing them. Recycling of everything from paper to computer products was prevalent. Buying habits varied, but there was evidence that people were buying locally whenever possible and preferred whole foods to processed foods. Evidence of energy conservation was most notable in the use of electricity. Most respondents avoided pesticides, herbicides and chemical fertilizers. Not many people practice water conservation, the survey noted.

It also was evident that well over half of the respondents drive low gasoline use cars. Many have Energy Star appliances in their kitchens and bathrooms. More people than not have insulated their water pipes and hot water heaters. Many have upgraded the insulation in their homes, and many have low flow shower heads. The high use of compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) and reusable shopping bags indicated a solid awareness of conservation practices.

Interestingly, however, the awareness of environmental issues and practices in our homes and families did not necessarily translate to our church facilities and church practices. We still used high emission fuels in our church heating plants and old incandescent bulbs throughout the facilities. Our heating systems were old and inefficient; our water heater was not insulated. Our kitchen practices were antiquated with the widespread use of throw-away goods and products used.

All this has changed in the three years of our Green Sanctuary program! As the Green Sanctuary Committee became familiar with church practices, we encouraged the inclusion of "Earth care" in our congregation's new mission statement.

We informed the church Board of Trustees of inadequate Earth care practices and proposed changes to existing policies. As we developed our programs, we focused on raising the congregation's awareness of our own existing practices as a congregation and the need for institutional habit change. This, of course has been slow, but over three years, we are now purchasing nontoxic, sustainable products, we have converted our inefficient water heater to an insulated, high performing one; we have a process for the deflection and conservation of rain water, we have converted to CFL bulbs throughout our facilities, and we have just undertaken the conversion from K2 heating fuel to modern, less carbon producing natural gas and invested \$30,000 in converting to more efficient burners.

Goal: Encourage personal lifestyle changes.

Through our Green Kitchen project (encouraging composting, recycling, and non-toxic cleaners, re-usable dishes/utensils), locavore suppers, encouraging the use of farmers' markets and Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs), encouraging local vegetable gardens among our congregation, and our Sponsor a CFL light bulb project we have encouraged a more sustainable lifestyle among the congregation.

Although at times this seemed an uphill battle, with someone—sometimes even members of Green Sanctuary—frequently suggesting disposables for large events, we have seen a shift toward reusable dishes, flatware, and so forth over the past three years. Now when disposables are suggested for an event by *anyone*—others leap into the gap with often quite imaginative alternatives. Given that the idea people are often not part of the Green Sanctuary Committee. Given that the idea people are often not part of the Green Sanctuary Committee, we seem to have gotten much of the congregation on board.

Goal: Engage in community action on environmental issues.

Through our work as a team member of the Brunswick Interfaith Earth Care Alliance, we've expanded our environmental action to include three congregations working together for the Earth consciousness. Beside raising environmental awareness through the film series mentioned earlier, we participated with our Earth Care team partners and others in the greater Brunswick community in two global demonstrations.

The first, 350 Global Day of Action, took place on October 24, 2009, as a means of introducing local communities around the globe to the necessity for reducing carbon emissions in the atmosphere from the then 387 parts per million to 350 ppm. On this day, a march started at our Earth Care partner church of St. Paul's Episcopal. Lacking a church bell, the St. Paul's people carried hand bells. There were many hand lettered or stenciled signs carried by the marchers brought the message to the community. At our church the march paused for a short address by our minister and a ringing of our church bell 35 times symbolizing the 350 ppm carbon target. The march continued through Brunswick's downtown and paused again at First Parish UCC, our other Earth Care partner, and we rang their church bell 350 times. Finally, the march ended on the Bowdoin College campus for a program with Maine's governor, veterans for clean energy, and members of the state legislature and US Congress. Estimates are that 200 people participated in this Global Action event in Brunswick.

We also participated in the Global Work Day on October 10, 2010, (10-10-10) by creating four teams of three people each from our congregation who were trained by Habitat for Humanity to weatherize homes, thus reducing the homes' carbon footprints while helping low income families to save money on heating bills. Our goal, which was achieved, was ten homes weatherized in one day. We now have a trained core of UUCB weatherizers and plan to use this core, and others added to it, in ensuing years.

Goal: Strengthen the connection between spiritual practice and Earth consciousness

“Being green means you’re considering Earth as one of the stakeholders in any decision you make. Ultimately, we’re heading toward developing humility about being human and about our place in the world. We are not the pinnacle of evolution, and we will take our place among the other species on the planet. And that’s spiritual. We’re not there yet, and our congregation is not there, but we’re moving in the right direction.” — Rev. Sylvia Stocker

The major spiritual practice of our UU congregation is its Sunday worship service. Here, our minister and worship committee are key in the planning of our liturgical and celebrational life together. In the beginning of our Green Sanctuary work, we noted that it was essential that our minister, the Rev. Sylvia Stocker, was with us and supportive as we set our goals.

We invited her to be present at some of our early meetings, and found that she not only supported our work, but had early connections with environmental study and writing. As our conversations continued, she mentioned the importance and power of including Earth care symbols in our liturgical elements such as hymns, readings, meditations, poetry, prayers, anthems, sermons and personal testimonies. She also suggested that we celebrate the cycles of seasonal changes, including continuing the annual Earth Day service in April. Our Worship Committee has now added an annual winter solstice service. Indeed, while our services have always included Seventh Principle themes and liturgical elements, there is a more intentional use of them now. (See Project A2.)

Our Green Sanctuary Committee has appointed a member as our chaplain and includes a reading from “Earth Prayers,” a compilation of readings on Earth Care at each of our monthly meetings. We also open our locavore suppers with readings and singing graces on Earth care values.

In addition, our Women’s Alliance read together the poetry of Wendell Berry as a spiritual exercise. It was well received and further readings were encouraged by members.

Every third year, our Religious Education Committee includes a three-month unit on Earth care for our children including songs, stories, games, plays, demonstrations. The Green Sanctuary Kids in Nature program has reinforced this with natural discovery field trips. (See Project B1.)

Whether an outgrowth of improved Earth awareness or not, a chapter of the Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans (CUUPS) has formed in our congregation in the last year. CUUPS works “to enrich and strengthen the religious pluralism of Unitarian Universalism; promote the study and practice of contemporary Pagan, Earth-, and nature-centered spirituality; enable networking among pagan-identified Unitarian Universalists; develop educational/liturgical materials on Pagan spirituality for Unitarian Universalist congregations; encourage theological inquiry

into the contemporary Pagan resurgence; promote inter-religious dialog; and work for the healing of the Earth” (CUUPS mission statement). This local group is exploring rituals and rites that can further enrich our Earth care symbolism. They first explored the use of a Beltane ritual in an outdoor setting on Bradbury Mountain, offering prayers for the Earth. They plan Summer Solstice ritual in June. A member of our Green Sanctuary Committee acts as a liaison with this new group.

Goal: Work to heal environmental injustices

As we understand it, the Green Sanctuary arm of UUA considers environmental injustice only to humans. In our initial proposal, we considered also the injustice to other species in having their habitats changed to parking lots and housing developments. We thus put a chimney swift protection project and a butterfly garden under righting environmental injustice. That said, the chimney swift project was completed by other organizations, and the butterfly garden project was re-located under B for RE, although we still feel that both right environmental injustices—that is, injustices to the environment.

Program Evaluation

(Evaluate in detail the effect the Green Sanctuary Program has had on your congregation. Please address each question separately.)

As a means of evaluation, two members of the Green Sanctuary Committee, Chair Robin Hansen and Connie Seidner interviewed **former Board Chair Cathey Cyrus**; **Strategic Planning Committee Chair Nancy Dorian**; **Strategic Planning Chair Bill Clark**; **Religious Education Chair Melissa Fochesato**; 2010–2011 Board Chair and youth leader Dr. Judy Chamberlain; and **our minister, the Rev. Sylvia Stocker**.

Because of the power of their statements and the current state of emergency following our sanctuary fire, their quotes have been left intact rather than boiled down to a single statement. Each quote is color-coded (indicated above) to simplify identification for the reader.

What do you believe has been the most important benefit your congregation has gained as a result of your participation in the Green Sanctuary Program?

“We think about Earth care. We have a whole different consciousness. Even if people drag their feet about specifics, they consider whether what they have in mind (for an event) will work within our Green Kitchen Policy. We know we have to learn more about our impact on the climate and on the earth. I don't think we would have made the changes we have without Green Sanctuary. And what we've changed will not go away. it will stay on as the foundation for more change.” – C. Cyrus

“There is an aspect to the Green Sanctuary initiative that is cost-saving. Currently that has to do with not buying paper napkins and Styrofoam cups, but extends to more cost-effective methods of heating. In a time of a budget crunch, this should not be ignored. The people in the congregation have had their consciousness raised relative to our 5th mission statement – to “Care for the Earth.” True, some people have a greater propensity to heed the message than others, but the message is out there for all to see. The CLYNK bags are out there in the community room. You can't dodge it at our church.” – N. Dorian

“Increased awareness of environmental issues and constant reminders of their importance to all communities.” B. Clark

“Speaking as a parent, I believe the Green Sanctuary message reinforces what children are being told at home by their parents. UU parents are pretty environmentally conscious to begin with — perhaps that's one reason they are attracted to the UU church. The “green” message from the church is congruent with what parents are telling their children. Speaking as the chair of the RE committee, I know that children have

become more environmentally aware because of the Green Sanctuary programs involving the children. They have enjoyed the field trips immensely.” – M. Fochesato

“Raising consciousness about living, for example, without paper goods. That was not part of people’s life (or consciousness), but now they’ve tried it and found out that it isn’t as hard as they thought it might be. It was a teachable moment for the congregation.” – J. Chamberlain

“Consciousness. Having to work together on something we didn’t all agree on, and having to work through it. I do hear people being more aware of things like using paper at events. The compost bucket stood full on the kitchen counter — it seemed like all winter — when we couldn’t get it out to the composter, but no one threw it in the trash. They would rather be green and have it be there, full, than throw it in the trash. That wouldn’t have happened a few years ago.

We have linked ourselves to other churches, and we are involved in a community effort to be green.” – S. Stocker

What has been the most difficult or challenging aspect of the program for your congregation to achieve?

“Getting the congregation to *own* the changes..., so that they *take* out the compost to the composter when they’ve filled the bucket and remember to follow the signage when throwing something “away.”

“Any request for a change of behavior will be like that. No one argues with the philosophy, but getting people to take it on board and treat it as part of their life can take time.” – C. Cyrus

“The biggest challenge was the kitchen. It required everyone to be involved, at least so that they deposited their trash in the appropriate container. The use of paper napkins remains somewhat of a quandary, but all in all, people feel OK about the changes.” – N. Dorian

“Not using disposable cups and napkins has been a challenge, but we have managed to do it. The children made cloth napkins that they use for snacks, and they now use tin juice cups that the teachers wash every week. Although this is an additional burden for teachers, they like the message it sends.” M. Fochesato

“The hardest thing has been getting people to buy into the ideas 100 percent, not only for coffee hour — that was easy — but for bigger, annual events. It’s hard. It’s breaking

habits, and it's so easy to fall back into old habits. And, bringing the laundered, ironed napkins back. Even in RE, that's a problem. Someone takes them home, launders them, irons them, and leaves them in their car for a month." – J. Chamberlain

"...the kitchen part was the most challenging. We had to be very intentional to make that happen. It was a lot of work. No one disagreed with the philosophy, but changing habits, that was difficult. Bringing the whole congregation along on this program, and not just the kitchen part, that was hard. Greening the Holiday Fair was a challenge." — S. Stocker

Have you been able to discern positive changes in your congregation's culture as a result of the activities you accomplished? If so, what are they?

"Yes. People *want* to do it (dinners, etc.) differently and having Green Sanctuary identify what is do-able provides a framework to lean on and within which to act.

"As we were in the midst of Green Sanctuary, our mission statement was created and agreed on in a congregational vote: The last of five lines is "Our mission is ... to care for the Earth.

"Many people are more thoughtful about disposing of waste and of wasting resources. The sorting of trash/refundables/recyclables/ compost has been impressive." – C. Cyrus

"Yes, green kitchen and bathroom practices ("Use only one paper towel" for example) have been accepted and are being followed. Our children have been made very aware of their environment, including best practices to preserve it. While it is probably true that UUs are likely to be environmentally conscious, the Green Sanctuary initiative "strengthens people's resolve" to do what they know they should do." – N. Dorian

"The updates of the Strategic Plan showed that the congregation is alert to Green Sanctuary issues, especially but not exclusively in our own corner of Brunswick. The Strategic Plan Committee will maintain its surveillance of the progress of projects proposed in the 2010–2014 Strategic Plan and offer assistance where appropriate/requested." – B. Clark

"The use of cloth napkins and reusable cups has become part of the RE culture. On more general terms, environmental awareness has been integrated into the curriculum. Teachers are constantly looking for ways to highlight earth central concepts in their lessons. " – M. Fochesato

“...I see people using a sponge or a rag instead of paper towels to clean up messes. And using only one paper towel to dry their hands in the restroom. [There’s a sign above the washbasin that says: “Paper towels are made from trees. Please use only one to dry your hands.”] – J. Chamberlain

“More people eat locally produced foods from the farmers markets, and more people choose to eat vegan.

“We now have an electronically delivered newsletter, which saves paper.

“We're more outward looking than we were: for the first time, we set up teams to work for Habitat for Humanity’s Step One Weatherization Program — we've been a covenant church with them for years, but never done anything in church teams for them before. Events are not blindly arranged as they were. The organizers are aware of sustainability, and think out how to get (ceramic) dishes and (cloth) napkins to off-campus church events.

“When we couldn't get clean power and had to change our heating system and still use fossil fuel, we chose the greener of the options, with the fewest carbon emissions and went to natural gas instead of oil.

“We have parts and pieces with green leanings. Things have changed and continue to change.” – S. Stocker

What are your intentions/aspirations for continuing to live out your Green Sanctuary commitments?

“We plan to sustain visible Green Sanctuary thinking and projects. We will continue the monthly Parish Messenger "Green Sanctuary Footprint," the locavore suppers are fabulous and will continue. We hope to improve the RE connection particularly for children but also for adults via conversations with RE and members of the RE committee and the Women’s Alliance.” – C. Cyrus

Personally, I look forward to constant reminders of the importance of Green Sanctuary issues and to project proposals that will carry the program forward.” – N. Dorian

“Earth consciousness and care are interwoven into the fabric of the UUCB Religious Education culture. Every three years there is a specific unit on care of the Earth. The units have different content at different grade levels, so that when a young person emerges from our RE program they have been thoroughly schooled on what it means to care for the environment.

“In the two years between these specific units, special events continue to happen because of the productive partnership between the Green Sanctuary initiative and RE.”
M. Fochesato

“I certainly hope we do! I hope we can expand beyond just our Green Kitchen success. We need to be sure that we continue to make our work with the UU Seven Principles, particularly the 7th Principle, weave into everything we introduce in RE.” – J. Chamberlain

“We plan to have periodic reviews of our goals and establish new goals. We want Green Sanctuary to be one of the factors in all decisions, as with the choice of a new heating system in Pennell House. I hope we will have another locavore supper, but maybe in the fall, and call it Fruits of the Harvest Supper.” – S. Stocker

What on-going role do you expect your congregation will take in the wider community relative to environmental issues? How do you feel recognition as a Green Sanctuary affects your position in the community?

“We will continue to respond when legislative issues arise. We will continue to work with Bowdoin College Zero Carbon program and with the Brunswick Interfaith Earth Care Alliance. Becoming a Green Sanctuary congregation will raise community consciousness of UUCB as a green force, and gives us credibility when we stand up for green/clean issues in the Town of Brunswick.” – C. Cyrus

“We should keep it up – consciously seek out ways to incorporate Green Sanctuary principles into church activities – in fact MAKE those opportunities. We should not be a nagging voice, but create excitement around events and opportunities – “be enticing.” Many people are already active in the community concerning these issues. I expect that we will see more UUCB'ers getting involved in community projects and proposing new community projects.

“Given the current political climate in Maine, I wonder if in the future we may seek to be a more active voice in politics — specifically to speak out against current legislative initiatives that will damage the environment. I also wonder if it might be a good idea to poll the congregation about what environmental groups they belong to.” – N. Dorian

“Recognition as a Green Sanctuary may attract young parents to the church. Maine is an environmentally conscious state. Parents may want their children to receive a religious education that is consonant with their own value structure. M. Fochesato

“It would be great if we could get a team to help with a Habitat for Humanity build—maybe just for a day at first. And there are other ways than building that we can help: They need refreshments, lunch, and cold water whenever there’s a build. There’s many ways to help with it.”

“When environmental issues come up locally or in the state, we can make a stand or write a letter. We’d have to ask for a congregational vote, but we’ve done that before with Welcoming Congregation. We took a letter to the state legislature that was approved unanimously by a congregational vote, and it had an impact in Augusta.

“I’d like to see us choose some things that make us more visible to the community as a Green Sanctuary.” — J. Chamberlain

“We have recently made our space available free for green events. In April, we had a toxic chemicals summit here by an outside organization.

“We are charter members of the Brunswick Interfaith Earth Care Alliance.

“We take part in global events like 350 ppm and 10-10-10 with other local churches and Bowdoin College and will continue to do so.”

“It can only help us garner respect and interest. Until recently, many people in the area had no idea what the UU church stood for. Now, they’re beginning to notice. — S. Stocker