



Opportunities for Environmental Justice Engagement at Columbus GA

By Ellen McClaran, UU Ministry for Earth Board member, First Unitarian Portland, OR

The theme of General Assembly (GA) 2016 is "Heart Land: Where Faiths Connect." There will be many workshops and activities that tie this theme to environmental, ecological, and climate justice. These presentations may be of interest to UUMFE members, supporters, and other justice seekers, particularly for congregations looking for inspiration and projects for their Green Sanctuary action plans.

If you are attending GA, please refer to your program book for the details and location of the offerings described below and be sure to come by our booth in the Exhibit Hall (#222), a.k.a., "Climate Justice Central." Hope to see you at GA!



Building Interfaith Partnerships To Address Climate Justice, Thursday at 10:45 a.m., *UU Ministry for Earth*. Panelists will share how the global events of Paris and Laudate Si get played out in localized environmental justice coalitions.

Exploring Regional and Interfaith Grassroots Organizing for Climate Justice, Thursday at 1:15 p.m., *North Texas UU Congregations*. Young Adult panelists will share stories and strategies from their regional, interfaith, multicultural climate justice conference in March that will inform strengthening roots and relationships for localized transformation and liberation.

Sustainable Development and Interfaith Action Against Climate Change, Thursday at 3 p.m., *UU United Nations Office*. Learn about UU delegates' multi-faith and multinational dialogue at COP21, the United Nations climate conference in Paris, and how we can engage in interfaith climate action in our communities.

Proposed Congregational Study/Action Issues (CSAI) for 2016-2020, Thursday at 3 p.m., *Commission on Social Witness*. Hear advocates for four proposed CSAIs present their issues and respond to questions. See article on p. 10 for the EJ CSAI.

Faith Communities Can Work Together To Reverse Climate Change, Friday at 3 p.m., *UUs for a Just Economic Community; First UU Church of Columbus, OH*. Faith community and youth leaders will discuss climate change, and practical actions to address the failure of democracy to mitigate its, due to unchallenged corporate power and money.

Shared Liberation: Movement Building That Honors Front-Line Communities, Saturday at 3 p.m., *Center for Ethical Living and Social Justice Renewal*. Through a race, power, and climate justice lens, learn how UUs can stand on the side of love holistically, authentically, and with integrity. ♦

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ABOUT UUMFE

Unitarian Universalist
Ministry for Earth is a non-
profit organization whose
supporters envision a world
in which reverence,
gratitude, and care for the
living Earth is central to
the lives of all people. As
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Message From the Board

We Unitarian Universalists have an approaching Tenth Anniversary that gives us an opportunity for a ‘renewal of vows.’ In June 2006, we ratified our call to action for addressing Global Warming/Climate Change with a comprehensive Statement of Conscience (SOC). The SOC includes something for everyone engaged in personal, congregational and community action in response to our challenges in building sustainable community. Check out the text of the SOC included as an Appendix to this Newsletter.

Now, ten years later, we are preparing to consider a new Congregational Study Action Issue (CSAI) that will be crafted into an SOC in four years. The topics include: A National Conversation On Race; Climate Change and Environmental Justice (see article on page 10); The Corruption of Our Democracy; and Ending Gun Violence in America. In building sustainable community, all of the proposed CSAI’s address some aspect of our work for ecological justice by engaging in collaborative activities with other faith and civic groups. The challenge for the delegates to the UUA General Assembly in Columbus, Ohio this June will be to choose just one statement that will provide focus for denomination-wide study and action. This is in addition, of course, to the calls for action from our Commit2Respond and Standing on the Side of Love campaigns and other initiatives from our UU leaders.

Can one statement encompass the focus and effectiveness we seek? We certainly hoped so back in 2006. At that General Assembly in St. Louis, the delegates were asked to consider over 50 amendments to the proposed language of the SOC – after two years of comments and drafting. What emerged was the result of a lot of collaborative work to include science, moral reflection, personal change, and community actions for justice. Our challenge today still includes how to incorporate that intersectionality of all our good works and intentions into one CSAI or one plan for justice work for each of our congregations or even what each of us personally chooses to focus on with our available energies.

The UU Ministry for Earth perspective on Earth Justice introduced in Green Paper 2 concludes by saying that Earth Justice, “Works in respectful, collaborative relationships to create the largest impact.” Therein is our challenge: to craft a CSAI and all our works that embody Earth Justice, including environmental justice, climate justice, racial justice, civil rights, economic justice, intergenerational justice, etc. with the opportunities for impact.

In gratitude for your advice and counsel and gifts,
Irene Keim, UUMFE Board Chair
office@UUMinistryforEarth.org ♦

Explore the Green Papers on the UUMFE website: http://uuministryforearth.org/Green_Papers_Environment_Justice

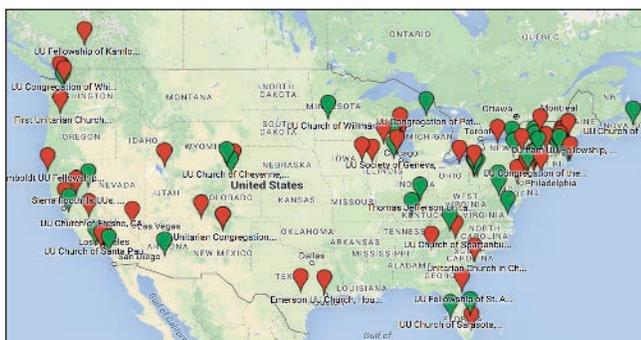
Highlights From Earth Day 2016

By Cindy Davidson, UUMFE Board member,
First Parish in Lexington, MA

Earth Day, that is the April 22nd official date of observation, comes once a year. The work, however, to celebrate and protect our Earth spills over into weeks, seasons, years, and lifetimes of many, many dedicated hours! Hours of unleashed creativity and attention to details, with eyes firmly fixed on the larger goal of a livable, sustainable future for all beings.

This year, UUMFE, in conjunction with the Commit2Respond campaign, invited UU congregations to share their plans for Earth Day and C2R's Climate Justice Month, by registering them on our website. Eighty-six congregations did just that and are on the map! (Well, except for our Hong Kong congregation...) Our UU congregations, no two alike, continue to inspire and encourage us by the commitment and passion they bring to the wide range of services, events and activities. They stand, in my eyes, as visible testaments to the growing Unitarian Universalist engagement in the Environmental Justice and Climate Justice movements.

Earth Day worship services across the country remind us "Every Day is Earth Day." The celebration of Earth Day began Earth Day Eve for one congregation who hosted a labyrinth walk and affirmations. An Earth Day vespers, a sunset



Map of congregations registering, describing, and sharing their Earth Day activities. Check it out: https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1bRZGaxe2Gzr6nk5PvJL_XL_04VA



evening prayer service, was part of the UU Justice Arizona Network annual meeting and celebration, with guest Rev. Peter Morales. Sunday worship services were planned and lead by our youth, lay ministers from Green Sanctuary Committees, a Rights of Nature Group with members of an "Our Place in the Web of Life" class, and settled and intern ministers. Environmental appreciation and ethics were proclaimed from the pulpit from a variety of perspectives: topics ranged from beauty, water, and conservation concerns to climate change's impact on the most vulnerable to the necessity of hope and commitment in our response and the embrace of climate justice activism. Engagement with the Commit2Respond campaign, carbon taxation policy, consumer choice on renewable energy suppliers of electricity, and the fossil fuel divestment movement were among the solutions encouraged.

"Earth Day" messages were not limited to the pulpit in some cases. One congregation incorporated a mud communion ritual into the service, while others collected dedicated and shared offerings for nature reserves and to support the work of UUMFE. (Thank you!) For some, worship spilled, most appropriately, into the out-of-doors: one congregation held an annual blessing of the bikes ritual following the service, and another held an animal blessing at brief outdoor worship in nearby park. A solar array was dedicated, gardens and grounds were blessed, and a groundbreaking for what will be the "greenest church in Iowa" celebrated. Children's Earth Day celebration activities followed some worship services and many congregations offered a range of environmentally focused social hour activities for all ages.

Music was the preferred mode of expression



Unitarian Universalists Hong Kong celebrating Earth Day. Photo sent by Marc Wathen.

for several congregations. One congregation held a dedicated Music Sunday service, another presented their fourth annual Earth Day concert, and another brought down the house by sponsoring two concerts with Emma’s Revolution. Several sponsored or participated in community interfaith sing-a-longs.

Several congregations organized blocks of programming extending throughout the month of April or in conjunction with Commit2Respond’s Climate Justice Month (World Water Day, March 22 through Earth Day, April 22). Congregations offered opportunities for education and dialogue: film and discussion nights; workshops and classes such as UUMFE’s “Our Place in the Web of Life,” Northwest Earth Institute’s “Change is our Choice: Creating Climate Solutions,” and Joanna Macy’s “Work that Reconnects;” sessions on climate change and communications; and an all-congregation conversation on “The Good News of Climate Change: Life without Oil, Reasons for Hope.”

Hands-on activities for congregations included clean up efforts in the neighborhood, park, watershed and “Adopt-a-Highway” program. Sightings of trillium and butterflies were the focus of several congregational walks and outings. On church grounds, all hands were on deck for xeriscaping and planting projects, tending

to the giving garden, and creating pollinator paradise by building bee houses. Others learned to make nontoxic household cleaners. Hearty appetites were stimulated by a “What Would Jesus Eat?” event, and several congregations hosted vegan lunches and potlucks and a program on permaculture gardening. Seventeen registered UU congregations hosted or participated in Earth Day fairs, festivals and community days, popular venues for congregational involvement, education and community outreach.

Congratulations to Edmonds Unitarian Universalist Congregation (EUUC) of Edmonds, WA for winning the drawing open to registered congregations for the \$50 gift certificate to InSpirit: The UU Book and Gift Shop! EUUC is a 285-member congregation; its Peace and Justice Committee is active with Interfaith Climate Action, comprised of Edmonds UU, Edmonds Methodist and Holy Rosary Catholic. Together, these groups held a community sing-a-long, “Lift Up Our Voices for the Earth: A Sno-King Gathering for Earth Day.” Since then, on May 14, at least sixteen congregants from Edmonds UU, and several others from other UU congregations as well as the Interfaith Climate

Action Group, gathered with over 1,000 others at the Anacortes Oil Refinery as part of Break Free Pacific Northwest. On May 15, the congregation voted to take an official public stand on global warming by a 94 percent vote of the members in attendance, affirming their “Congregational Stand on Global Warming / Climate Justice” (see articles on pages 13-14).

Thank you to those who shared your plans and enthusiasm with us! We look forward to working with you again next year.

Learn more about what UU congregations have been doing to celebrate Earth Day and



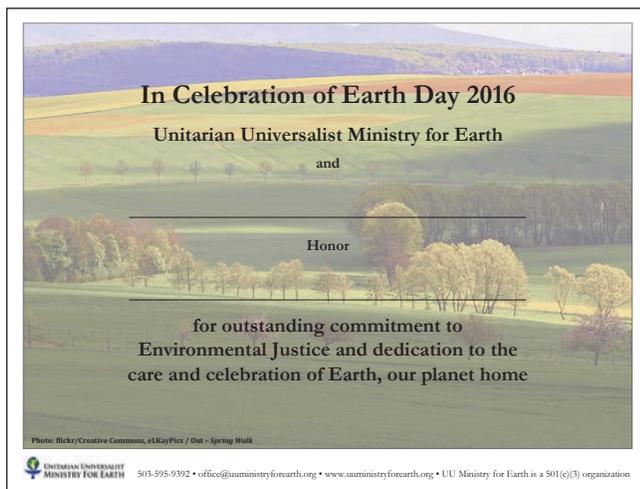
Climate Justice Month on our website at:
<http://uuministryforearth.org/files/2016-ED-Events-04-24-2016.pdf>.

As always, if you have a story or photos to share, please send them to us at office@uuministryforearth.org. We would love to feature them on our website or Facebook page! ♦

Celebrating Our Eco-Heroes

*By Ellen McClaran, UUMFE Board member,
First Unitarian Portland, OR*

Each year, UUMFE invites congregations to honor an Eco-Hero with a special certificate during an Earth Sunday service or other occasion (see sample below). An Eco-Hero is that dedicated, hard working person who has made a significant contribution to a church's Earth ministry during the previous year.



You celebrated a record number (26) of Eco-Heroes in 2016! Read a brief description of each honoree, as well as those from previous years, at <http://uuministryforearth.org/congregational-eco-heroes>. Congratulations to all and thank you for your dedication and hard work.

2016 Congregational Eco-Heroes:

- Anne Neave – UU Fellowship of Kamloops, BC
- David Korten – Humboldt UU Fellowship, Bayside, CA
- Carol Semelroth – UU Congregation, Mission Viejo, CA

- Beth Brownlie – UU Community Church of Santa Monica, CA
- Alison Kendall – UU Community Church of Santa Monica, CA
- Misti Sharp – Foothills Unitarian Church, Fort Collins, CO
- Dr. Lea Hall – UU Church of Sarasota, FL
- April Lai – Unitarian Universalists Hong Kong
- Rich Fendrych – Prairie Circle UU Congregation, Grays Lake, IL
- Allen Armstrong – First Parish UU, Portland, ME
- Karen Martin – North Parish of North Andover, MA
- The children in our 'Spirit Arts' group – First Parish Brewster UU, Brewster, MA
- Tom Sullivan – All Souls UU, Greenfield, MA
- Sheila Place – Unitarian Church of Barnstable, Yarmouth Port, MA
- Deb Hansen – UU Congregation of Petoskey, MI
- Diana Olson – San Juan UU Fellowship, Farmington, NM
- Mariel Nanasi – UU Congregation of Santa Fe, NM
- Joan Walker – UU Congregation of Queens, Flushing, NY
- Our refreshments contributors! – UU Congregation of the Great South Bay, Sayville, NY
- Al Gore – May Memorial UU Society, Syracuse, NY
- Allyn Clarke – The Universalist Unitarian Church of Halifax, NS
- Sharon Strong – Unitarian Church in Charleston, SC
- Dan Rigney – Emerson UU Church, Houston, TX
- Larry Underwood – Bull Run UUs, Manassas, VA
- Robin van Tine – UU Fellowship of the Peninsula, Newport News, VA
- Carlo Voli – Edmonds UU Congregation, WA
- Emma's Revolution (Pat Humphries and Sandy O) – Quimper UU Fellowship, Port Townsend, WA
- UU Fellowship Social Action Team – UU Fellowship of Laramie, WY ♦

Rising Waters Confab II.

*By Bob Keim, former UUMFE Board member,
UU Church in the Pines, Weeki Wachee, FL*

I know I usually write book reviews. But seriously, my wife and I just went through a week's adventure that was engaging, compelling, and deeply educational. You see, we were invited to the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation's Rising Waters Confab II event in Captiva, Florida. This was a gathering of twenty artists, scientists, and ecological justice activists on the Foundation's 22 acres on a small island sitting all of one-to-three feet above the Gulf of Mexico (except for the beach dunes) off the southwest coast of our home state. All of us had been nominated privately by someone who had either seen or heard our work, so the chance to be invited was a most pleasant surprise.

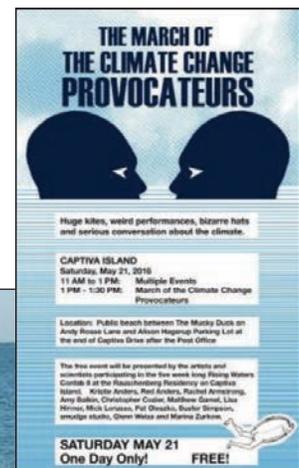
The premise behind the Confab was to bring together educated and creative thinkers from the U.S. and other countries to address climate change, particularly sea level rise. These would be people who in their own way, embodied the artist Rauschenberg's principles: fearlessness, a pioneering mind, creative problem solving, multidisciplinary interests, generous spirit, deep love of the island's environment and community, and a global vision.

Well, low-lying landmasses such as Captiva Island provide both a laboratory and a platform to address rising waters worldwide and will be among the first to be affected by global weather disturbances. Resting so near sea level, the island offers an opportunity to serve as a "ground zero" threshold for discussions and actions on ways to address one of the most crucial issues of our time. Since it is inevitable that climate change will require a phased adaptation proportionate to humanity's will and ability; our focus was on graceful migration, sustainable in all forms: social, cultural, and political.

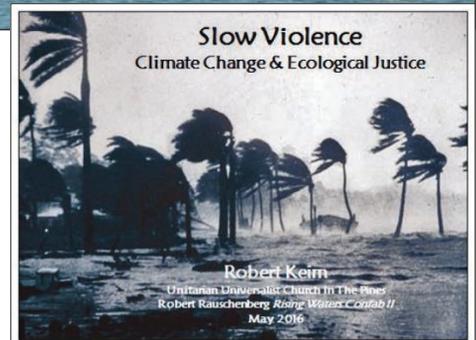
The Confab was highly open-ended, with participants engaging in collective discussions and collaborative projects, with time for personal

investigations/work. Projects and actions could encompass interventions, research, agit props, performances, social engagements, and creative solutions. In addition to the core residents, participants such as us rotated throughout the month to help stir and inform the collaborative work, including engineers, activists, and scientists. Discussions and presentations were active and engaging, and works coming out of the community were varied and provocative; consider two of the three below (Glenn Weiss of Delray Beach, Florida's poster "March of the Climate Change Provocateurs," and Buster Simpson of Seattle photographing a chair on a raft).

The third image comes from mine and my wife Irene's contribution to the Friday night discussion. Speaking to a gathering consisting of individuals



of all variety of religious traditions and belief systems, we were able to reach across and interact



with those intimately involved in artistic-spiritual intersections, and engage those working to bridge art and science. Given that these people already work very hard to address ecological justice issues with meaningful and communicative art,

the chance to intrigue and challenge both their thinking and ours was, to me, quite a gift.

Such associations reminded me of the significance of the work of Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth, and of the desperate need to ratchet up the importance and denominational voice of 2006's Statement of Conscience on Global Warming & Climate Change. On an issue connected to that of rising waters, while oceanographers have been monitoring Gulf of Mexico rising sea levels for almost forty years, they've also been noticing signs of decreasing water quality. To quote Scientific American Magazine, from a September, 2008 article, "We are acidifying the ocean and fundamentally changing its remarkably delicate geochemical balance... Society can continue to depend on the ocean for help, but the cost is a rising threat to all marine life." And when you add the challenge of increasing industrial pollution, its essentially three strikes at one time: rising seas, diminishing productivity, and compromised sea life stocks. Is it possibly becoming past time to begin wondering where it all ends?

Still, living amongst such knowledge, Irene and I look forward to an opportunity to return to Captiva on the 24th of May to get a first-hand look at works produced by members of the group. A new community now exists, of which we are honored to be a small part, and all of us will return to our parts of the world with renewed and shared inspiration and commitment. Come visit the group at <https://risingwatersrr.wordpress.com>. ♦

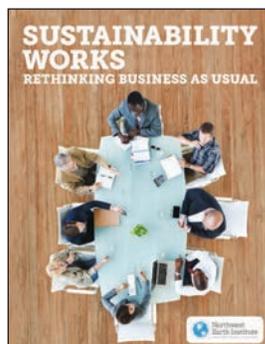


On the beach, Captiva Island

Sustainability Works: New Curriculum From NWEI

By Ellen McClaran, UUMFE Board, First Unitarian Portland, OR

On Earth Day 2016, Northwest Earth Institute (NWEI) released *Sustainability Works: Rethinking Business as Usual*. This course is focused on sustainable business practices,



including those for churches and other non-profits. It is offered as a four-session interactive e-book that includes access to videos and links to resources, infographics, etc. as well as discussion topics and action ideas.

Deborah McNamara at NWEI notes: "By participating in this new discussion course, participants will learn about the business case for sustainability from environmental, economic and social perspectives and identify qualities, tools and practices needed for leading in sustainability at your own organization or in your community. Participants will also practice systems thinking skills and explore personal resilience."

To learn more about this and other outstanding courses, go to <http://nwei.org>. When you place an order, please choose UU Ministry for Earth in the "select the partner organization who referred you" section of the order form and NWEI will donate a small percentage of the fees to UUMFE. ♦

Feeling Virtuous, Being Virtuous

By Rev. Earl W. Koteen, UUMFE Board member, Berkeley Fellowship of UUs, CA

Which is better: Feeling virtuous or being virtuous?

Now don't answer that question too quickly. And just because I'm a minister, don't imagine you know which answer I'm looking for.

My truth is that feeling virtuous is a lot more fun than being virtuous. There are even philosophers who argue that virtue is feeling. But even without the lesson in ethics, feeling good is usually more fun than the hard work of being good.

I also enjoy feeling self-righteous and holier than thou. The holier than thou part is very difficult when most of your coreligionists don't believe in a deity or a single sacred text. That doesn't stop me.

Let's take one of my favorite and frequent opportunities to be self-righteous. I have a ministry of environmental justice and climate change. When I go into low-income neighborhoods

“When you go out into the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands, and stick together.”

– Robert Fulghum, *All I Really Need To Know I Learned in Kindergarten*

near refineries, highways, and other sources of pollution, I don't have to persuade anyone that there is environmental injustice. The

residents are my teachers. They and public health officials regularly tell me that we are poisoning the people in these communities leading to cancers, heart attacks, and other causes of premature death.

So let's get back to self-righteousness because it's so much more fun. I get to be self-righteous when I go to UU congregations and some self-satisfied a-hole tells me that he's done his bit because he put solar on his roof and bought a Prius. This is like going in to a doctor, telling him that there is an Ebola vector in the community, and hearing him say that we all should take two aspirin and call him in the morning.

A second response is learned helplessness. They say, “I know the situation is bad but I just have no idea what to do.” When you offer suggestions about how they might figure that out for themselves, they nod their heads and return to helplessness.

A third response, one that I actually respect, is that they're too scared to do the right thing. The media is filled with reports about how dangerous it is to reach out to those already suffering the consequences of environmental degradation.

I appreciate this and understand that being virtuous is sometimes incredibly difficult. I also assure them that unlike Tim DeChristopher they need not spend two years in prison to stand by our UU principles.

Unfortunately self-righteousness is not the gift that keeps on giving. Sooner or later I have to acknowledge my own fears and the finger that was pointing outward is turned inward.

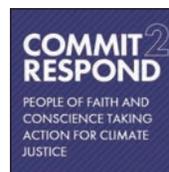
We are on a very, very scary journey. And though my crystal ball is always cloudy, there is almost every reason to imagine that things are going to get much worse. As Robert Fulghum recommended, we should hold hands crossing the street.

May you all be blessed with love and courage and good companions. ♦

Commit2Respond Connects and Inspires

Adapted from “A Celebration and Prayer for Earth Day,” a Commit2Respond.org blog entry on April 22 by Aly Tharp & Irene Keim

From Rev. Dr. Marilyn Sewell, *The Moral Demands of Climate Change*, 2016 UUMFE Earth Day Sermon: “When we act alone, it is true that we feel powerless. Our strength and courage, though, shine out when we join with a group of others, all with the same values, working for the same cause.” (<http://uuministryforearth.org/celebrate-earth-day-1>)



The Commit2Respond campaign is a collaboration of Unitarian Universalist (UU) organizations working for climate justice. The campaign is building a network

of UUs and climate justice organizations and is continuing to ramp up communication and connection to opportunities for public witness, partnerships, and advocacy. For example, many UUs participated in the recent 350.org Break Free (from fossil fuels) events and posted pictures and comments for Commit2Respond share online and in e-mails.

Climate Justice Month 2016, sponsored by Commit2Respond, brought together climate justice activists from all across our denomination, demonstrating that together we move with strength and courage. Our meditations and public witness spanned World Water Day, March 22, through Earth Day, April 22. See the many related posts on the Commit2Respond blog, beginning on Feb. 29 at <http://www.commit2respond.org/news>.

The UU Service Committee (UUSC) helped us bring a call for justice on World Water Day to the attention of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency with a petition that was delivered at an Inter-American Commission on Human Rights hearing (see March 22 blog post).



Thousands answered the call to witness with the UUA and our UU state advocacy networks by participating in Democracy Spring and Democracy Awakening in early April, in the name of fair representation and voting rights in our democracy (see video at <http://democracyawakening.org/> and March 31 blog post). Over 1,400 activists were arrested during the events, which prompted nearly 100 members of Congress to call for hearings on voting rights and campaign finance reform legislation.



UUs, including UUMFE Board member Cindy Davidson, were present at the Church Center of

the United Nations for the presentation of the Interfaith Statement on Climate Change to the



President of the UN, which was signed by over 6,100 individuals and

organizations, including UUA President Peter Morales (<http://www.interfaithstatement2016.org/statement>). Cindy wrote about the ceremony on the Commit2Respond blog on April 21. We celebrated also that Secretary of State John Kerry signed the Paris Agreement on Earth Day, with his granddaughter on his lap (see April 19 blog post).

During the week of Earth Day, a call for Action through Poetry encouraged us to reflect and renew our covenant for climate justice in ways that honor our cultures, lived experiences and deepest selves. Check out the offerings, starting with one from spoken word poet Christopher Sims (see April 19 blog post).



We celebrate the many UUs across the United States who are engaged in Earth Day events, including worship services, workshops, community fairs, and climate justice actions (see link to map of events on page 3). You are encouraged to share your pictures and stories to help inspire others with your creativity and commitment. Please post on social media or send to UU Ministry for Earth: office@uuministryforearth.org.

The Commit2Respond campaign members include UU Ministry for Earth, UU Young Adults for Climate Justice, Environmental Justice Collaboratory, UU Service Committee, College of Social Justice, UU Association, UU Ministers Association, Liberal Religious Educators Association, and Diverse Revolutionary UU Multicultural Ministries (DRUUMM). ♦

Congregational Study Action Issues (CSAI) – How Shall We Proceed?

By the members of UU Ministry for Earth Board of Directors

We are on the road to genocide if not ecocide. The climatologist Michael Mann recently pointed out that all four horsemen of the apocalypse – war, starvation, pestilence, and death – have arrived and are becoming more powerful.

We not only need to keep fossil fuels in the ground, reclaim our democracy, and effect a massive transfer of wealth from the 1% and the developed world: we need to do it quickly. Many already know the truth and would be relieved to hear it and to speak it.

– Rev. Earl Koteen, UUMFE board member, SunFlower Alliance

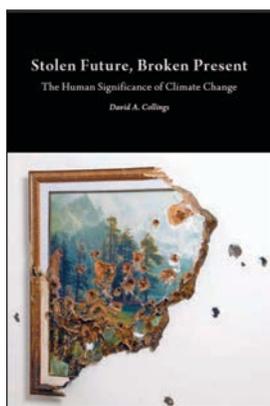
Shocked and Bombarded

The statistics about climate change become more shocking every day. The news about injustices bombards us continually in the news cycles in the United States and from around the globe. We know the numbers are not good; we know we and our neighbors are working to address the problems; groups are in the news and the streets about energy policy, civil rights, immigration, economic justice, and other

issues of building safe, resilient, and sustaining communities of life.

The UU Young Adults for Climate Justice (UUYACJ) are reading *Stolen Future, Broken Present: The Human Significance of Climate Change* by David A. Collings and discussing

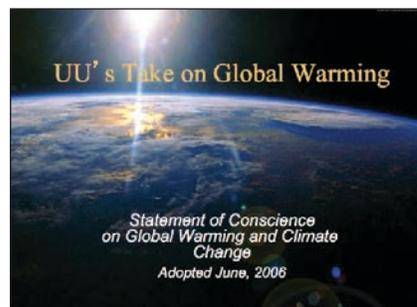
the book in an online book group. The UUYACJ members and the group emphasize a sense of urgency that we know is needed and must act upon. Consider this statement in the book,



“Perhaps only a brutal restatement of our situation will ... help us focus on what will happen to us in our own immediate surroundings. So here it is: climate change is devastating, absolutely powerful, undismissible, even if in our darker, most selfish moments we might want to say ‘damn the ice caps’ or ‘the hell with Tuvalu,’ even if we might wish to mutter so as no one can hear, ‘pfft to plankton’ or ‘good riddance to the coral reefs.’”

Calls to Action

This is not new information or new encouragement for us to act. Please take the time to reread the 2006 Statement of Conscience on The Threat of Global Warming/Climate Change. In addition to addressing, science, faith, justice and



policy groundings and action, the first sentence is a call to action: “We are part of this world and its destiny is our own.”

Just last year, UUMFE hosted author David Korten at the UUA General Assembly in Portland, OR. A conversation between Korten and Rev. Mel Hoover showcased the message of inclusive faith, community, and economy presented in Korten’s book *Change the Story, Change the Future*. All of his suggested actions are supported by the visions of our Seven Principles. But, how do we get there at a pace that deals with our awareness of escalating challenges?

The Challenge of Many Issues

A recent piece in *The Nation* by James Gustave Speth and J. Phillip Thompson III provides insight on past strategies and future directions. The article, *A Radical Alliance of Black and Green Could Save the World*, weaves the history of two movements and how a fusion movement is needed today. Quotes from the article:

“When one explores the roots of both the

environmental and civil-rights movements, one finds a strikingly similar radical critique. Both movements have called for a deep restructuring of society and the economy; in both cases, that call is based on an affirmation of life and the devoted care that life requires of us.”

“There is urgency in this fusing. . . . 46 years after the first Earth Day, we find ourselves on the cusp of a ruined planet. Climate change is bearing down on us, with dire consequences that disproportionately impact the poor.”

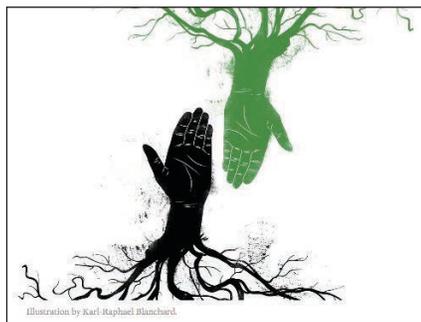
“Rebuilding people power requires a fusion of progressive efforts, which means that progressives of all stripes must come out of our individual silos to build an unprecedented social movement.”

“Human dignity cannot be restored fully without first displacing the God-like status that Western thought has bestowed on some at the expense of others, as well as our instinct to sort life into hierarchies of value. Full dignity requires that humans be reconnected to each other and to the natural world that sustains all life.”

“How do we overcome our tragic legacy of subordinating nature to humans and humans to other humans? . . . Love, care, respect – we owe these to each other and to the natural world, and their common wellspring is an attitude of the heart, an abiding humility, awe, and reverence in the face of life’s wondrous creations: the very opposite of arrogance.”

We Are Needed

Unitarian Universalists are well-equipped to form the coalitions necessary to address the dire warnings about the impacts of climate change on all of our justice works – to build a movement. UUMFE has been focused on the theme of Sustainable Communities for years and the CSAI



proposed for this General Assembly ‘Climate Change and Environmental Justice’ gives us a vehicle to include reflection and action for a fusion movement in all of our congregations over the next four years.

Inspiration is at our fingertips. For example, the theme of General Assembly 2016 in Columbus Ohio is ‘Heart Land: Where Faiths Connect.’ It will be an assembly of leaders and communities of many faiths to worship together, learn from one another, and create a new vision of faith that no longer divides us, but connects us to an interdependent future that works for all. What better time to expand to the power of coalitions and collaborations? For additional inspiration and reference, the *The Principles of Environmental Justice* (EJ) published in 1991 by the People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit are included as an appendix to this newsletter. This statement includes respect, representation, safety, health, and more. See <http://www.ejnet.org/ej/> for links to many EJ resources.

The text of the proposed CSAI is also included as an appendix. Much can be added to our discussions and actions, and the foundation of environmental justice is one we can build upon.

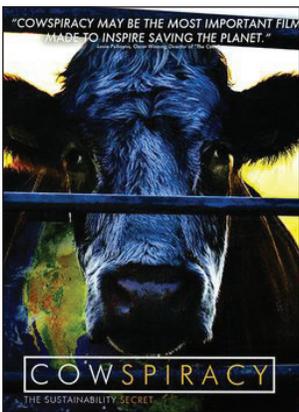
The call from UUMFE is that this is the time to advance a movement. This is the time to live into ‘intersectionality’ as a strategy and strength for our justice works. This is the time to sing hymn #121, *We’ll Build A Land* – ancient words, adapted in the 20th century and sung with new meaning in the 21st century. ♦

***Cowspiracy: The Sustainability Secret* – Guest Opinion and Film Review**

By Sabrina Louise, UU Animal Ministry Board member, First Unitarian Portland, OR

According to an NBC/Gallup Survey Series Apoll, I’m not the only one concerned about the state of Earth. However, in 1991, 75 percent of all Americans considered themselves to be

environmentalists, and in 2016 the number is shockingly lower, with only 42 percent self-identifying. Despite this increase in apathy at a time when CO2 in the atmosphere is at an all time high, Kip Anderson and Keegan Kuhn set out to create the documentary, *Cowspiracy: The Sustainability Secret* (2014), to investigate what they suspected is the world's leading contributor to global warming, deforestation, diminishing natural resources, ocean dead zones, and contaminated groundwater, rivers and streams. The filmmakers conclude that the source is "animal agriculture" (see <http://www.cowspiracy.com/facts/>). For me, this film is a game changer, as it confronts the very environmental groups that haven't been addressing how animal agriculture fits into the



picture, or promoting what I think is the single most significant solution, i.e., reducing or eliminating animal agriculture (which could contribute significantly to the slowing and eventual reversal of climate change) through the

promotion of a plant based diet.

Instead of emphasizing painful footage, the filmmakers' focus is on factual footnoted visual statistics, info-graphs and charts, comical animation, interviews from related organizations, former cattle rancher (and UU from Kittitas Valley) Howard Lyman, the dairy industry, small "sustainable" family farms, activists, and doctors. I found their stories are shocking, inspiring, and exceptionally convincing. In its wake, *Cowspiracy* has prompted much interest from teachers across the country, looking for educational material for their classrooms, and those resources are still in production. In the meantime, you can find film clips on You Tube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wM4q6bNHpU8>). You can access books, media, an infographic, and more from

the website homepage (<http://www.cowspiracy.com/homepage/>) as well as purchase the film or learn how to host a screening. *Cowspiracy* is also available on Netflix.

What is perhaps most interesting is that despite film backers relinquishing funds prematurely due to the growing controversy of the film's contents amidst original supporters, *Cowspiracy* was almost entirely publically crowd-funded, and is very successful at painting us a vivid image of how humankind is contributing to our own species' foresighted extinction. While individual reduction of animal based foods is certainly not the *only* way we can fight global environmental destruction and species extinction (and is recognized as not an appropriate solution for the entire world's people), those who can and do shift to a plant based diet (or significantly reduce their intake) have the power to make a tremendous difference.

Two UU principles I learned early in life have helped shape me significantly: the belief in the inherent worth and dignity of every person (which I joyfully extend to all beings) and the belief in the interdependent web of life, of which we are a part. Some days, it is a challenge to remain hopeful, attempting to live those values in my day-to-day life, while so much destruction is being done to Earth, to each other and to the species we share this planet with. This film gives us hope, and inspires us to do the one thing we **do** have control over ... change our diet. ♦

Taking a Stand on Climate Justice

By Cindy Craeger, Peace and Justice

Committee, Edmonds UU Congregation, WA

Edmonds Unitarian Universalist Congregation overwhelmingly passed a Congregational Stand on Global Warming at its annual meeting in May.

The Stand states that Global Warming is a moral crisis caused by human activity. It calls on members to take action to resist the forces unraveling the web of life, stop the harm, and to begin the transformation to a low carbon economy

in such a way as to promote social, economic, racial, food and water justice.

Edmonds UU Congregation spent six months after the stand was first submitted to the Board of Trustees for review in a process known as the education phase. Global warming and the moral imperative were explored through book groups, movies, a workshop, sermons, and question and answer sessions, to prepare members for the vote.

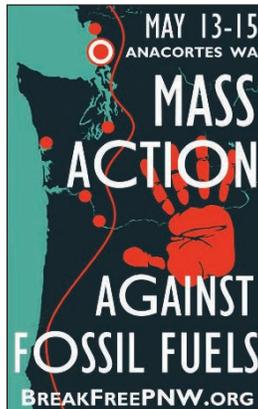
Even before the vote, members of the congregation have been active in the climate movement, participating in and giving leadership to groups actively engaged in the struggle to protect the climate for several years. We hope



Edmonds Unitarian Universalist Congregation

that our “taking a stand” action will inspire other UU congregations and organizations to follow a similar path. A copy of the Stand on Global Warming may be found at: <http://euuc.org/congregation/global-warming.php> ♦

Pacific NW UUs Participate in Break Free Action in Anacortes, WA



Over a dozen members of Edmonds UU Congregation (above left) and dozens more UUs from numerous churches in Oregon (above right) participated in the three-day Break Free event at the Shell and Tesoro oil refineries in Anacortes, WA – the largest unaddressed source of carbon pollution in the Northwest. See great videos and photos of this action at <http://breakfreepnw.org/>; from other US actions at <https://usa.breakfree2016.org/>; and around the world at <https://breakfree2016.org/>.

Your Support Is Needed and Appreciated – Please Consider a Donation

This issue of the UUMFE newsletter highlights exciting projects that depend on you, our supporters. Your donations make possible the work towards Earth ministry as an integral part of our Unitarian Universalist experience. Go to www.uuministryforearth.org for donation options, as well as many UUMFE resources, e.g., our revised environmental justice curriculum. Thank you for your generosity.



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Proposed Congregational Study/Action Issue: Climate Change and Environmental Justice

Issue: What is the moral response to climate change? How can congregations work in solidarity with the oppressed? The problems of racism, economic injustice, patriarchy, ageism, and ableism continue. A vision with a plan for environmental justice is needed. Support human rights, care for the wounded, and defend Mother Earth.

Grounding: The Unitarian Universalist Association has seven principles. All of the principles are connected and all of the principles matter. Member congregations acknowledge an interdependent web of existence. Congregations work together for justice, equity, and compassion with "the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all."

Topics For Congregational Study

- Conversations about climate change and energy policy have changed during the past ten years. The Union of Concerned Scientists has noted major changes in the global environment. Leaders like Pope Francis discuss climate change and the need for social justice. The world's human population is now over seven billion. Review the current situation.
- The world is caught in a series of energy dilemmas. Energy use is essential for human survival but energy production and distribution are identified with environmental problems. Some people consume enormous quantities of energy while others beg for adequate shelter and transportation. Developing nations want to escape from poverty. Major energy corporations have enormous influence. Nations fight to control energy resources.
- Who can provide all people with an adequate source of power that is clean and safe, accessible and affordable, and sustainable?
- Review the Earth Charter and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. What's needed in the energy economy? What delays human progress? How can religious organizations be helpful?
- The impact of climate change is here and now. How can religious organizations care for climate refugees, the very young and the very old, and for others who need special attention?
- Unitarian Universalists affirm the worth and dignity of every "person." Should the Association's principles be changed to acknowledge the worth and dignity of every "being"?

Topics For Congregational/District Action

- Enlighten your community. Work for an energy economy that provides "justice for all."
- Support Commit2Respond and other Unitarian Universalist networks and groups that are concerned about social justice and the environment.
- Be compassionate and helpful. Reduce automobile use while improving access to religious and community programs. Anticipate extreme weather events, floods and droughts, and other crises. Identify resources and be prepared for some challenges. Feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, and care for trauma victims. Your congregation can lead by example.

Related Social Justice Statements

- Support a Strong, Compassionate Global Climate Agreement in 2015: Act for a Livable Climate (2015 AIW)
<http://www.uua.org/statements/support-strong-compassionate-global-climate-agreement-2015-act-livable-climate>
- Fossil Fuel Divestment (2014 Business Resolution)
<http://www.uua.org/statements/fossil-fuel-divestment>
- Threat of Global Warming/Climate Change (2006 Statement of Conscience)
<http://www.uua.org/statements/threat-global-warmingclimate-change>

WE, THE PEOPLE OF COLOR, gathered together at this multinational People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, to begin to build a national and international movement of all peoples of color to fight the destruction and taking of our lands and communities, do hereby re-establish our spiritual interdependence to the sacredness of our Mother Earth; to respect and celebrate each of our cultures, languages and beliefs about the natural world and our roles in healing ourselves; to ensure environmental justice; to promote economic alternatives which would contribute to the development of environmentally safe livelihoods; and, to secure our political, economic and cultural liberation that has been denied for over 500 years of colonization and oppression, resulting in the poisoning of our communities and land and the genocide of our peoples, do affirm and adopt these Principles of Environmental Justice:

The Principles of Environmental Justice (EJ)

- 1) **Environmental Justice** affirms the sacredness of Mother Earth, ecological unity and the interdependence of all species, and the right to be free from ecological destruction.
- 2) **Environmental Justice** demands that public policy be based on mutual respect and justice for all peoples, free from any form of discrimination or bias.
- 3) **Environmental Justice** mandates the right to ethical, balanced and responsible uses of land and renewable resources in the interest of a sustainable planet for humans and other living things.
- 4) **Environmental Justice** calls for universal protection from nuclear testing, extraction, production and disposal of toxic/hazardous wastes and poisons and nuclear testing that threaten the fundamental right to clean air, land, water, and food.
- 5) **Environmental Justice** affirms the fundamental right to political, economic, cultural and environmental self-determination of all peoples.
- 6) **Environmental Justice** demands the cessation of the production of all toxins, hazardous wastes, and radioactive materials, and that all past and current producers be held strictly accountable to the people for detoxification and the containment at the point of production.
- 7) **Environmental Justice** demands the right to participate as equal partners at every level of decision-making, including needs assessment, planning, implementation, enforcement and evaluation.
- 8) **Environmental Justice** affirms the right of all workers to a safe and healthy work environment without being forced to choose between an unsafe livelihood and unemployment. It also affirms the right of those who work at home to be free from environmental hazards.
- 9) **Environmental Justice** protects the right of victims of environmental injustice to receive full compensation and reparations for damages as well as quality health care.
- 10) **Environmental Justice** considers governmental acts of environmental injustice a violation of international law, the Universal Declaration On Human Rights, and the United Nations Convention on Genocide.
- 11) **Environmental Justice** must recognize a special legal and natural relationship of Native Peoples to the U.S. government through treaties, agreements, compacts, and covenants affirming sovereignty and self-determination.
- 12) **Environmental Justice** affirms the need for urban and rural ecological policies to clean up and rebuild our cities and rural areas in balance with nature, honoring the cultural integrity of all our communities, and provided fair access for all to the full range of resources.
- 13) **Environmental Justice** calls for the strict enforcement of principles of informed consent, and a halt to the testing of experimental reproductive and medical procedures and vaccinations on people of color.
- 14) **Environmental Justice** opposes the destructive operations of multi-national corporations.
- 15) **Environmental Justice** opposes military occupation, repression and exploitation of lands, peoples and cultures, and other life forms.
- 16) **Environmental Justice** calls for the education of present and future generations which emphasizes social and environmental issues, based on our experience and an appreciation of our diverse cultural perspectives.
- 17) **Environmental Justice** requires that we, as individuals, make personal and consumer choices to consume as little of Mother Earth's resources and to produce as little waste as possible; and make the conscious decision to challenge and reprioritize our lifestyles to ensure the health of the natural world for present and future generations.

More info on environmental justice and environmental racism can be found online at www.ejnet.org/ej

Delegates to the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit held on October 24-27, 1991, in Washington DC, drafted and adopted these 17 principles of Environmental Justice. Since then, the Principles have served as a defining document for the growing grassroots movement for environmental justice.

Threat of Global Warming/Climate Change

2006 Statement of Conscience

Earth is our home. We are part of this world and its destiny is our own. Life on this planet will be gravely affected unless we embrace new practices, ethics, and values to guide our lives on a warming planet. As Unitarian Universalists, how can our faith inform our actions to remedy and mitigate global warming/climate change? We declare by this Statement of Conscience that we will not acquiesce to the ongoing degradation and destruction of life that human actions are leaving to our children and grandchildren. We as Unitarian Universalists are called to join with others to halt practices that fuel global warming/climate change, to instigate sustainable alternatives, and to mitigate the impending effects of global warming/climate change with just and ethical responses. As a people of faith, we commit to a renewed reverence for life and respect for the interdependent web of all existence.

A Matter of Science

There is scientific consensus that the Earth's climate is changing due to global warming/climate change caused primarily by the human use of oil, coal, and natural gas. The burning of these fossil fuels releases carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, which traps more heat from the sun. Global warming/climate change is accelerating as planetary temperatures reach record highs. The melting of polar ice and mountain glaciers may cause sea levels to rise by at least three feet, probably much more, and by eighty feet in coming centuries if the average temperature rises five degrees, warming that will be difficult to avoid. Half of the world's plant and animal species are at risk of extinction by 2100 as habitats are destroyed and ecosystems unravel. The huge Siberian permafrost peat bogs are apparently starting to melt, releasing methane and accelerating global warming/climate change. Antarctic glaciers are sliding into the ocean faster than previously expected, which may result in worldwide coastal flooding. Rapidly melting polar ice caps and glaciers provide visual evidence of global warming/climate change. Indirect effects due to melting polar and Greenland ice can upset the delicate salt balance in the North Atlantic Ocean, triggering a shift in the thermohaline current, which ironically may result in a local ice age in Northern Europe and parts of North America.

Increasing temperatures can devastate human communities and wildlife habitats. Warmer climates are extending toward the poles, dramatically altering ecosystems. Melting polar ice caps raise sea levels and upset the delicate balance of ocean salinity. This imbalance may lead to a shift in ocean circulation patterns, which could wreak havoc with regional climates. Recent increases in sea surface temperatures are linked with more intense hurricanes.

Global warming/climate change can cause both increases and decreases in local temperatures and precipitation. Until now the effects of global warming/climate change have been proportionate to increases in greenhouse gas concentrations. We can minimize the damage of climate change only if we act vigorously and soon—in the next decade according to top climate scientist. Since human-generated greenhouse gases are at a level not seen for at least 600,000 years, effects will persist and increase for a while even as we begin to control emissions. Climatic changes, combined with habitat destruction and pollution, are causing loss of species, forests, human settlements, glaciers, and coastal heritage sites. All living organisms depend on ecosystems that can be sustained only in relatively narrow temperature ranges.

The recent rapid global average temperature increase is indeed the result of human activity. While the climate is always changing, attribution studies using sophisticated supercomputer global climate models show that natural causes do not account for the recent rapid temperature increase and that human activity does. See the 2001 IPCC/SPM report, Figure 2.4.

A Matter of Faith and Justice

As Unitarian Universalists, we are called by our seventh Principle to affirm and promote "respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part." We envision a world in which all people are assured a secure and meaningful life that is ecologically responsible and sustainable, in which every form of life has intrinsic value. In other words, Unitarian Universalists are called to defer to a balance between our individual needs and those of all other organisms. Entire cultures, nations, and life forms are at risk of extinction while basic human rights to adequate supplies of food, fresh water, and health as well as sustainable livelihoods for humans are being undermined. To live, we must both consume and dispose. Both our consumption and our disposal burden the interdependent web of existence. To sustain the interdependent web, we must burden it less while maintaining the essentials of our lives. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita are painful omens of how racism, sexism, and poverty worsen the effects of global warming/climate change. Our world is calling us to gather in community and respond from our moral and spiritual wealth; together we can transform our individual and congregational lives into acts of moral witness, discarding our harmful habits for new behaviors and practices that will sustain life on Earth, ever vigilant against injustice.

A Matter of Policy

Global warming/climate change is not only an environmental phenomenon; it is a hotly contested policy issue. All countries, in particular developing countries, will be unable to protect their residents from sea level increases, frequent and intense droughts, heavy rains, and violent hurricanes and tornadoes. Species worldwide face extinction from these same events. It is a bitter irony and a grave injustice that economically developed countries that are most responsible for global warming/climate change possess the wealth, technology, and infrastructure to cope with its negative effects, while those who have the least will have the largest burdens to bear.

In 1992, the United States ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Convention calls for its signatories to stabilize their greenhouse gas emission rates. It also states that economically developed countries will take the lead in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and not use scientific uncertainty about some aspects of climate change as a cause for delaying an immediate response. While the scientific evidence is solid, there seems to be an effort by some to confuse the public. To date, the United States has not ratified the Kyoto Protocol to the Convention, which sets milestones for reducing greenhouse gas emission rates. International cooperation is critical for addressing this global dilemma.

A Call to Action

Affirming that we are of this earth and that humankind has brought about global warming/climate change, we, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, pledge to ground our missions and ministries in reverence for this earth and responsibility to it as we undertake these personal practices, congregational actions, and advocacy goals.

Personal Practices

- Reduce our use of energy and our consumption of manufactured goods that become waste;
- Use alternative sources of energy to reduce global warming/climate change and to encourage the development of such sources;
- Choose the most energy-efficient transportation means that meet our needs and abilities (e.g., walk, bike, carpool, use mass transit and communication technologies, and limit travel);
- Determine our personal energy consumption and pledge to reduce our use of energy and carbon emissions by at least 20 percent by 2010 or sooner and into the future;
- Reuse, recycle, and reduce waste;
- Plant and preserve trees and native plants and choose sustainably harvested wood and wood products;
- Eat and serve energy-efficient food that is locally produced and low on the food chain;
- Use financial resources to encourage corporate social responsibility with reference to global warming/climate change;
- Model these practices by committing to a life of simplicity and Earth stewardship;
- Consume less, choose appliances that are rated energy-efficient (e.g., by the EPA Energy Star Program), and choose products and materials that are made from renewable resources and can be recycled at the end of their usefulness; and
- Commit to continue to learn about the science, impact, and mitigation of global warming/climate change and communicate this knowledge by teaching about and discussing the problems and dangers of, and actions to address, climate change.

Congregational Actions

- Celebrate reverence for the interdependent web of existence in all aspects of congregational life;
- Treat environmentally responsible practices as a spiritual discipline;
- Seek certification through the Green Sanctuary Program of the Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth;
- Educate ourselves, our children, and future generations on sustainable ways to live interdependently;
- Whenever possible, plan congregational facilities around proximity to public transportation and encourage congregants, as they are able, to travel by public transportation, walking, biking, and carpooling;
- Seek U. S. Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification for all new congregational building projects and use LEED guidelines for renovation projects;
- Use congregational financial resources to positively address the global warming/climate change crisis;
- Practice environmentally responsible consumption and encourage voluntary simplicity among members;
- Build a broader base for environmentally mindful policies and practices through congregational alliances within Unitarian Universalism, through interfaith channels, and with secular entities; and

- Maximize the energy efficiency of congregational facilities by enrolling in the EPA's Energy Star for Congregations Program.

Denominational Affairs

We call upon our denominational leaders to provide:

- Leadership, by calling upon the major political parties to develop energy and climate change policies and to make them central topics of debate in state, congressional, and presidential elections;
- Education, by providing spiritual, educational, and technical resources for congregational and individual responses;
- Justice, by seeking opportunities for public witness for environmental justice, including joining interfaith and public events promoting a just response to climate change;
- Sustainable practices, by exploring the options for performing environmental audits of all UUA properties and for modeling appropriate management and purchasing practices;
- Sustainable investing, by exploring the potential for using the ownership rights of the denomination's financial resources to positively address the global warming/climate change crisis;
- Support, by assisting congregations in evaluating and addressing the risks and challenges they face as a result of global warming/climate change;
- Recognition of congregational action, by encouraging, honoring, and publicizing the work of UU congregations, including those that achieve Green Sanctuary accreditation; and
- Ministry, by recognizing and supporting the need for UU leaders to help others understand the urgency and severity of addressing global warming/climate change, the resulting potential for despair, and places to find hope for the future.

Advocacy Goals

- Full compliance with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, with the understanding that because human activity is affecting global climate change, it follows that the greater our total population the greater the impact;
- Ratification of and compliance with the Kyoto Protocol;
- Funding for research and development of renewable energy resources and energy-efficient technologies that includes a shift of federal subsidies from fossil fuel industries to renewable energy technologies and improved energy efficiency;
- Funding of regional, national, and international programs to assist in mitigating the effects of global warming/climate change;
- Safe and responsible development of power sources with low greenhouse gas emissions;
- Policies and practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase forestation and other forms of carbon dioxide sequestration;
- Funding for development of energy-efficient mass transit and encouragement of its widespread use;
- Global warming/climate change impact studies (including physical, social, and economic effects) to be conducted by local and regional governments, with the findings to be incorporated into local government processes;
- Urban and regional planning designed to reduce energy consumption;
- Access to family planning services in the United States and around the world;
- Significantly strengthened Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency (CAFE) standards for automobiles and light trucks;
- National greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets of 10 percent below current levels by 2015, 20 percent by 2020, and 60 percent by 2030;
- United States policy that takes a leadership role in future global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate the negative impacts of global warming/climate change;
- Monitor, propose, and support legislation at the local and state level related to global warming/climate change and opportunities to reduce emissions; and
- Provide information on legislative advocacy opportunities to members of the congregation.

Given our human capacity to reflect and act upon our own lives as well as the condition of the world, we accept with humility and determination our responsibility to remedy and mitigate global warming/climate change through innovation, cooperation, and self-discipline. We undertake this work for the preservation of life on Earth.