

Cedar Lane UU Church

Environmental Task Force - Green Sanctuary

Report – April, 2006



Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church
9601 Cedar Lane, Bethesda, MD 20814-4099



Unitarian Universalist
Ministry for Earth

Seventh UU Principle:

“Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.”

Our church members are becoming aware of how our use of energy and other aspects of our lives are affecting the climate and our total environment. The Environmental Task Force (ETF) has been working since 2003 on programs to aid members of the CLUUC community gain an understanding of our relationships to our environment. The UU Ministry for Earth’s Green Sanctuary program provides guidance in bringing environmental awareness to four aspects of the life of the church and its members’ personal lives:

1. Worship,
2. Religious Education,
3. Environmental Justice, and
4. Sustainable Living practices.

We are motivated to do these things in order to reduce global warming and to put into practice the Seventh Principle. The process can also help the church save money as we become more energy efficient and more careful about recycling and reducing waste.

There are five steps to become a Green Sanctuary, and we have completed three:

1. Setting up a committee
2. Doing an environmental audit, and
3. Developing 12 action items

The fourth and fifth steps that we will need to do next are:

4. Becoming a candidate, and
5. Becoming accredited as a Green Sanctuary

We will finalize our list of 12 action items soon and plan to apply to become a candidate for Green Sanctuary then. It will take another year or two to complete our 12 action items and become accredited as a Green Sanctuary. We will ask the congregation to vote for accreditation when we have completed them, and will then join 40 other UU churches which have already been accredited as Green Sanctuaries and an additional 38 which have been admitted to candidacy for it.

We have been reaching out to the whole church to increase sustainable living practices by the church and its members in the ways listed below. The Cedar Lane Board agreed with our goals in March, 2005:

- We held two meetings with chairs and members of all Cedar Lane committees to see what the church’s current environmental practices are and to encourage them to adopt sustainable living practices.
- Roger gave a sermon on global warming (fall, 2005) and plans to give another one on another environmental topic on Earth Day.
- Forum and sermon speakers and addressed various environmental topics, such as global warming and climate change, persistent pesticides, energy efficiency, nuclear power and solid

waste issues. Speakers included Mike Tidwell, Lynn Goldman, Peter Lowenthal, Harvey Lerner and Lester Brown.

- We have encouraged the R.E. Program to include environmental topics in classes for children, adolescents and adults.
- We developed several Spring B environmental classes.
- We have been increasing the visibility of our work through our Green Tips column in the newsletter.
- We have gotten a good turnout from all ages at the Rock Creek cleanup.
- We have supported the Children of Chernobyl group and consider it our environmental justice project.
- We advocated for the most important environmental bill of the 2006 Maryland General Assembly session, the Healthy Air Act, which just passed.

We are beginning to see changes in church practices:

- Lyn reduced the newsletter from weekly to bi-monthly
- We have been given the OK to use recycled cardboard coffee cups, instead of polystyrene.
- Lights that turn on and off automatically have recently been installed in the ladies' and men's rooms.
- The ETF represents CLUUC as a founding member of the Greater Washington Interfaith Power and Light Company, which buys renewable energy with the interfaith religious community.
- The ETF requested that the Endowment Committee to buy some stock in the Vanguard Calvert Social Index Fund in Oct., 2004.
- The Site and Facilities and Finance Committees have allocated money for the purchase of three kinds of renewable energy (solar, wind, and landfill) and for an energy efficiency audit.
- Congregational Meeting planners asked the ETF for healthy beverage recommendations for lunch.

We encourage members to reduce, recycle, reuse, and use renewable energy and other sustainable environmental practices both at church and in their own lives:

- We have sold many energy-efficient compact fluorescent light bulbs to church members.
- We organized a holiday card reuse collection
- We provided reusable recycling signs and collection bins for the spring auction, as well as included a recycling reminder in the program that was printed on recycled-content paper. We also donated a basket of products with environmental attributes as an auction item.

Molly Hauck and Charlotte Brewer are the Environmental Task Force Co-Chairs. Members include George Durland, Janet Fox and Connie Nissley. Dave Hawver, Rita Pitillo, Nancy Derr and Peter Yarrington were active on the ETF 2004-05. Nancy Derr, Peter Lowenthal, Jim Laurensen, Debbie Trent and Mark Hodge were involved in the 2003 Energy Expo.

We welcome new members. Stop by our table in the lobby between services to find out more or contact Molly at mollyhauck@verizon.net or Charlotte at jarvischarlot@aol.com.

For further information, go to the website at www.UUMinistryforEarth.org.

12 Action Items for Cedar Lane's Green Sanctuary Program:

Worship (2 required):

- 1) Environmentally related services: Global warming by Mike Tidwell (spring, 2005) and Roger (fall, 2005), State of the World by Lester Brown (2004).
- 2) Chapel services—ongoing hymns and talks about appreciation of the natural world.

RE (2 required):

- 3) ETF planned and led sponsored Spring B classes in 2000, 2005, 2006 for all ages.
- 4) Classes for children and adolescents: Individual classes have incorporated environmental topics in different ways. 9th grade movie made of Rock Creek Clean Up.
- 5) Adult-focused programs:
 - a) Adult programs (2004-06) "Has Nuclear Power a Role in Mitigating Global Warming?" a nuclear energy debate and discussion. Encourage simplifying lives through Voluntary Simplicity class.
 - b) Forum topics: storage of nuclear waste, trash, persistent pollutants, more intense storms and bird flu.

Environmental Justice (2 required):

- 6) Friends of Chernobyl Centers US (FOCCUS) sponsoring children from Slavutich, a town near Chernobyl, with Cedar Lane families (summer, 2006)
- 7) Ongoing environmental-social justice activity with another organization, possibly the Potomac Conservancy.
- 8) Ongoing table at coffee hour encouraging members to write letters and sign petitions about environmental issues. Also create awareness of issues in the news.

Sustainable Practices. (4 required):

- 9) Reduce our footprint on the environment at church and at home by:
 - a) At church by:
 - Using environmentally sustainable office supplies, such as: recycled copy paper and non-toxic cleaning supplies
 - Using cardboard cups (not polystyrene) at coffee hour
 - Using china, glasses, and silverware for meals and receptions, rather than disposable items
 - Reducing the use of paper through bi-weekly newsletters
 - Facilitating more conscientious recycling by committees that use a lot of paper (e.g., auction programs) and bottles
 - b) At home by:
 - Educating and urging all members to adopt similar practices.
 - Taking Spring B participants to the Montgomery County Transfer Station to learn how the county handles household hazardous wastes, including the compact fluorescent light bulbs that we sold.
- 10) Reduce our contribution to global warming:
 - a) At church by:
 - Holding church energy audit and begin the process of implementing its recommendations
 - Installing lights that turn on and off automatically throughout the church and Chalice House
 - Having the church buy "Green tags" (renewable energy) through the Greater Washington Interfaith Power and Light Co. (GWIPL) and two other companies.
 - b) At home by implementing things that individuals can do to reduce the use of energy and the release of carbon dioxide, such as:
 - Using the compact fluorescent light bulbs that we sold at coffee hour.
 - Increasing our energy efficiency at home by implementing lessons learned from Peter Lowenthal's adult program class.
 - Provided list of steps individuals can take to reduce global warming.
 - Urging the use of energy generated through renewable energy sources such as solar, wind and methane gas generated from landfills.
- 11) Encourage serving healthier food at church (such as organically-grown foods) when possible at coffee hour, receptions, memorial services, the congregational meeting, teacher appreciation day, the Rock Creek cleanup, and before Sunday afternoon Adult Program classes.

Overlapping Areas:

- 12) Green tips in biweekly newsletter.