



Green Sanctuary
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
Congregational Stewardship Services
25 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108
617.948.4251

Application for Green Sanctuary Accreditation

Congregation Information

Congregation Name: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Church, Unitarian Universalist (TJMC UU)

Address: 717 Rugby Rd., Charlottesville, VA

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Minister: Rev. Erik Walker Wikstrom

Congregation Profile

TJMC UU is a vibrant, growing church in Charlottesville, Virginia, home of the University of Virginia and Presidents Thomas Jefferson and James Monroe. Our campus, just a mile away from the University and perched at the highest point in Charlottesville, began with a sanctuary, parlor, Jefferson Room foyer and classrooms built in 1951 with the support of the American Unitarian Association. An attached Social Hall and offices were added in 1995, and the church owns two adjacent old homes. Summit House (1875) is used primarily for church groups, but also for housing the homeless for several weeks, and U-House (1917) is currently rented to four tenants, mostly graduate students.

We now have over 455 members, including 24 youths, and a budget for 2011-12 of \$569,694. In 2008, our two ministers, a husband-wife team, the Revs. David and Leslie Takahashi-Morris, departed for a ministry in California, and we called our first interim minister, the Rev. Dr. Morris Hudgins for two years, followed by a second interim minister, the Rev. Dr. Janet Newman. In spring 2011, after three years of searching, we called the Rev. Erik Walker-Wikstrom to be our settled minister. The TJMC-UU Board of Trustees is comprised of 12 church members including six at-large members, who are all elected by the congregation. In 2007-08, the Board voted to revise the organizational structure of the church and create councils, each

comprised of representatives from related committees and groups. Currently the Administrative, Worship, Community Life, Lifespan Religious Education, and Social Action Councils work with the Board to support the volunteers in the work of the church. In addition to the minister, the church supports a part-time pastoral care minister, a full-time religious education director, a full-time church administrator, a part-time music director and a part-time religious education assistant. We contract for cleaning and custodial services. The religious education program educates more than 180 children, and offers an Adult Faith Development program as well. A choir performs for church services, which are at 9:15 and 11:15 from September through May, and at 10:00 during the summer months. Total attendance last fall ranged from 170-230 each Sunday.

Church life includes a regular round of fundraisers, potlucks, covenant groups, adult faith development, and social justice activities, of which PACEM, (People and Congregations Engaged in Ministry), which houses the homeless on our campus for several weeks during the winter, and IMPACT, an interfaith movement to change local policy and programs as they impact the poor, are the largest. On the whole, the church appears to be healthy, blessed with committed leadership and staff. The congregation is open and welcoming, and has received an infusion of new energy with the successful ministerial search last year. The church is a UUA certified Welcoming Congregation, and the ministries are growing and changing in positive ways. Participation in social action programs is wide and deep, with many church members taking leadership roles in community initiatives.

However, despite the excitement of a new minister, the congregation is at a crossroads today. Throughout our history TJMC, UU has often been under budget duress. Although we are a larger congregation, we have been unable to raise the resources to support the ministerial staff that the activities and congregational size require. A Facilities Task Force and Personnel Task Force have been working during our interim ministries and presented reports along with ours in January 2012. We have space demands that continue to grow, but aging buildings that are expensive to keep up. This is the context that shapes the efforts of the Green Sanctuary Task Force, formed as a committee by the Board in November 2008, convened in January 2009 to begin the process to become a candidate for Green Sanctuary Certification by the UUA, and elevated to a Task Force of the Board in November 2009. We became a Green Sanctuary Candidate in February 2010.

Congregational Vote

During a Jan. 29 Sunday service and Congregational Meeting, the congregation voted to approve the following motion:

The Green Sanctuary Task Force of TJMC-UU hereby moves to recommend approval by the Board and the congregation of its Report and Application for Green Sanctuary designation at the next Congregational Meeting Jan. 29, 2012.

Unitarian Universalists are committed to the 7th Principle, “Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.” The mission of the Green Sanctuary Program of Thomas Jefferson Memorial Church, Unitarian Universalist is to transform our congregation and its practices into a beacon of environmental sustainability and justice.

We affirm that religion is (should be) more than a belief and support system. It should also be what we practice each day in the routine of living—in relationships, in neighborhoods, in public and private enterprises. Each of us will strive to participate in the environmental communities that surround our church. We will seek to bring about a more “green,” humane world for all peoples. We will support activities that sustain Earth; we will struggle against those who would destroy it. Through our religious practices we hope to continue as a community that loves life and seeks to nurture Earth for all future generations.

In recognition of the universal right to a clean and livable environment, as well as of the fragility of Earth and all living things, we join together to add our efforts to protect and maintain the health, vitality, beauty and diversity of our planet Earth and its life-giving resources.

We request that in addition to voting to approve the Green Sanctuary application, we each individually commit ourselves to becoming more informed about the ways our choices and behaviors impact Earth and to choose wherever possible, sustainability and the health of the living Earth. We strive to live lightly and to reduce our environmental impact through our consumption and energy choices. We affirm and promote programs to educate and demonstrate best practices in these vital areas affecting the health and sustainability of the Earth. We incorporate Seventh Principle values and practices into our worship services, celebrations, and religious education programs.

As members of this congregation and as participants in the Green Sanctuary program, we pledge our encouragement to one another in a personal and congregational commitment to living this promise through our Unitarian Universalist principles.

We respectfully request congregational approval of our application to UUA for Green Sanctuary designation.

January 2011

Please attach documentation of your congregation’s vote to seek Green Sanctuary certification (e.g., Annual Meeting minutes). Include the specific statement the congregation voted on.

Completion of Action Plan

** Attendance numbers are included after each program in parentheses ()*

Worship and Celebration Projects

Project Title: Earth Day/Green Sanctuary Worship & Celebrations

Project Description: Offer a celebration of the Earth with music, readings, and sermon on current environmental issue(s). May include guest musicians, guest speakers, and interfaith readings.

Outcomes: Three **worship services:** “Our Sacred Trees,” Earth Day, April 2010 (offered twice); “Healing the Gulf,” July 2010; “What’s the Story of Your Food?” Mother’s Day, May 2011 (offered twice). **Celebrations:** Mother Earth Brunch, May 2011 -- (250 served), Recognition of TJMC “Eco-Heroes” during services ; a new ritual lighting of a green candle “to hold our hopes for peace and for the planet that we share” every Sunday; dedication of the TJMC Green Sanctuary Arboretum, Nov. 2011.

Timeline for Completion: Ongoing. We intend to continue offering 1-2 worship services a year and plan to co-sponsor the Mother Earth Brunch on Mother’s Day with the Social Committee annually.

Leads: Laura Wallace, Nancy Hurrelbrinck, Sharon Baiocco, Katie Corish, Jean Botts

Project Title: Interfaith Vigil for the People and Mountains of Appalachia

Project Description: Coordinate and conduct a vigil in support of the people of Appalachia and against mountaintop removal coal mining. Invite local faith communities to read statements of conscience, incorporate local musicians, and invite guest speakers. Read names of mountains that have been destroyed and/or are threatened.

Outcomes: Held two Interfaith Vigils for the People and Mountains of Appalachia services, Oct. 2009, 2010. Attendance was 60-75 for each vigil. The 2009 Vigil brought readers from Jewish, Quaker, Episcopalian and UU traditions to participate in a candlelight evening service. The 2011 Vigil featured a sermon by the Rev. Rose Edington, (Charleston),” Justice, Equity and Compassion in the Mountains,” a roll call of mountains destroyed, a performance from the play “Cry of the Mountain” by actor-playwright Adelind Horan, a candle-lighting ceremony, and mountain-themed music by the The Murphys and Friends and Charlottesville Women’s Choir.

Timeline for Completion: This event was not as successful in drawing the audience from the community that we expected. In the future, we will work to support events organized by Appalachian Voices rather than sponsoring our own event.

Leads: Katie Corish, Laura Wallace, Jean Botts

Religious Education Projects

Project Title: Mini-Green Workshops and Adult Faith Development Courses

Project Description: Offer two workshops annually on a particular environmental theme such as gardening and food, conservation and recycling, living more simply. Use members of the congregation with special expertise to conduct the workshops that will be “hands on” activities, practical ways in which we can incorporate the 7th Principle into our daily lives. Offer these through Adult Faith Development as feasible.

Outcomes: Organized four workshops: “Composting with Earth Worms,” with Worm Crusader Jan. 2010 (20); Blogger Sharon Astyk, “Climate Change and the Economic Crisis,” Sept. 2010 (30); “Transition Cities,” January 2011 (25); “Zero Garbage Challenge,” April 2011 (35). Offered two Northwest Earth Institute courses: “Building Community Resilience to Climate Change, Peak Oil, and No Growth Economy,” (10). (Two workshops were open to all members of the congregation -- “Rainwater Harvesting” and “Weatherizing Your Home.”) Oct. 2010; and “A World of Health Connecting people, Place and Planet” -- in partnership with the Sierra Club (10) Feb/Mar 2011.

Timeline for Completion: Completed. We will continue to offer workshops and courses in partnership with our Adult Faith Development program at least once a year.

Leads: Nancy Hurrelbrinck, Deborah Judson-Ebbets, Ruth Douglas

Project Title: Children’s Religious Education Programming

Project Description: Offer environmental education programs for elementary children each spring. In April 2010, we offered a Stars Studios month-long unit (1st-5th grades) on Earth Stewardship to include four studios (drama/movement, story, arts, cooking) for each group. Topics included Rachel Carson, Jacques Cousteau, vegetarianism, and Quality Community Council Urban Farm (a local site). In fall 2010 children learned about mountaintop removal coal mining, and in spring 2011 they learned the value of trees in general and our own trees in particular.

Outcomes: Children collected reusable bags from our members and friends, cleaned them up and decorated them. Finally, they distributed them to those who work and harvest the food in the urban farm run by Quality Community Council at a nearby public-housing site. The preteens heard a talk, “What is Mountaintop Removal?” and the elementary children helped decorate and make a “Why I Love Mountains” Quilt in fall 2010. In spring 2011, elementary children had a field lesson about trees from TJMC member and local outreach educator for the Virginia Museum of Natural History Jenny Gaden and took part in a tree “scavenger hunt.”

Timeline for Completion: Completed. We intend to introduce environmental topics into the RE curriculum every spring.

Leads: Margaret Gorman, Lorie Craddock, Leia Durland-Jones, Jean Botts, Jenny Gaden

Environmental Justice Projects

Project Title: “Go Tell it on the Mountain,” Advocate to End Mountaintop Removal

Build an interfaith grass roots program to educate diverse faith communities about mountaintop removal (MTR) and its impact on communities. Visit a MTR site. Partner with other UU congregations in Virginia and environmental groups, including Sierra Club and Appalachian Voices, to develop an educational presentation and train speakers. Encourage action in petitions to Congressional representatives, the EPA, and state governments to end/slow this environmental and community degradation.

Outcomes: Attended a Stream Saver state bill Senate hearing in Richmond along with Appalachian Voices, opponents of mountaintop removal coal mining. (5) Two of us testified, January 2010. Traveled to Kayford Mtn. to be witnesses to MTR and to meet activists and UUs in West Virginia. (10) June 2010. Held two Sunday evening vigils for the Mountains and People of Appalachia, including sermons by ministers from the UU Congregation of Charleston, WV (60). Presented talks and sermons on MTR to the Congregation of the Peninsula, April 2010, St. Paul’s Episcopal (Charlottesville) Feb. 13, and UU Congregation of Williamsburg in April 2011. Created Interfaith Green Network e-list (10) and Eco-justice e-list for Charlottesville (18). Spoke about this project at the Green Sanctuary session at General Assembly in Charlotte, June 2011 and included in UU World’s summer 2011 story about anti-MTR activism. Participated in “Virginia Rising” demonstration before the EPA Building in Washington, D.C., November, 2011.

Timeline for Completion: This is ongoing until the EPA ends MTR. We have assembled, but not contacted, a list of local churches we wish to approach about sponsoring talks about MTR. We continue to petition the EPA and Virginia legislature for tougher enforcement of laws and regulations protecting our water supply.

Leads: Sharon Baiocco, Glenn Short, Sallie Kate Park, Laura Wallace

Project Title: Tree Stewardship and TJMC Arboretum

Project Description: We planned to evaluate the health and identify the trees on the TJMC grounds including those that are memorials to various people living or dead and publish a pamphlet about them. Sacred Tree tours were scheduled in the spring and fall. The RE children learned about trees and our special trees.

Outcomes: Offered a joint sermon with the minister, “Our Sacred Trees,” followed by a tour of our trees on Earth Day, 2010. Hired arborists to trim and feed some trees, as needed. Planted a small fruit orchard. Published a pamphlet and created a Tree Arboretum on our grounds, showcasing the diversity, age, and beauty of the trees on our campus. RE children had a tree scavenger hunt. We created a guide with map of trees on our grounds, scheduled tree tours and a dedication of our Green Sanctuary Arboretum in November 2011, and mounted a sign and information box near one of our large oaks. Outdoor compost bins were constructed to recycle yard waste.

Timeline for Completion: We completed all of the above, but we will be recommending a policy so that people don’t just donate trees without thought to size, drought resistance, etc. This should be completed by spring 2012.

Leads: Al Reynolds, Sallie Kate Park

Sustainable Living Projects

Project Title: Weatherization and Energy Upgrades for Our Buildings

Project Description: Two of our buildings are over 100 years old, and our main sanctuary is over 60 years old. Major upgrades and repairs have been deferred over a long period due to budget shortfalls. In 2009 a line item was created to fund energy efficiency improvements, but it only began to address the major problems we faced. We incorporated energy conservation into our annual repairs and upgrades; set goals for energy reduction; monitored utility bills and usage, and made regular reports to the Board. We set a goal for energy conservation and reviewing our energy bills to see whether we met our 7% reduction goal.

Outcomes: We achieved a 15% reduction in energy consumption for the years 2009-2011, during which time we made many improvements: Sealed and added insulation to the attic and overhead lights in the sanctuary; converted overhead lighting in the Social Hall and Parlor to dimmable CFLs, and ceiling fans were installed in the Social Hall. Purchased and installed new LED EXIT signs and a new exterior door to the Parlor, and sealed all eight fireplaces in Summit House against air leaks. Summit House was treated for mildew and mold, with the crawl space being completely sealed to the upper floor with foam insulation, and sprayed for mold at a cost of over \$11,300. Purchased and installed energy-efficient light fixtures for sanctuary basement. Purchased and installed insulating shades for the ramp windows between the Sanctuary and the Social Hall. Entered the LEAP Clean Energy Makeover Non-Profit Challenge Contest. We had 25 registrations and came in second. The church contracted with Dixon Trash Disposal AT NO COST to haul our trash and recyclables to Van Der Linde Recycling Center in Fluvanna County, where their Green Machine employs “single-stream” recycling, recovering over 90% of it.” New insulated doors and windows (\$6,000) are awaiting installation for the Edgewood Lane sanctuary entrance.

Timeline for Completion: Ongoing. We will also investigate grant funding for upgrading our buildings’ energy efficiency and advise the Facilities Planning Task Force on “green” options as the Board’s plans for new or renovated buildings develop. Three members of the Green Sanctuary Task Force also serve on the Facilities Planning Task Force.

Leads: John Semmelhack and Dick Somer

Project Title: Sustainability Covenant for our Church

Project Description: Our church did not have any policy about energy efficiency, recycling, and sustainable purchasing and investing. We proposed to develop a comprehensive Board Policy for Decision-Making and Sustainability, but decided instead to propose a Board Covenant.

Outcomes: Board approved June 2010; education outreach to decision-makers, fall 2011. Teams of Green Sanctuary members led discussions of the implications of the Covenant at Council meetings. The Covenant follows:

A COVENANT: DECISION-MAKING & SUSTAINABILITY

On behalf of members of Thomas Jefferson Memorial Church UU Church, the Board covenants to:

- Reduce/Reuse. TJMC UU will continually strive to become more efficient in the use of energy, water, and other resources for all church activities, and will reuse materials as feasible.
- Recycle. TJMC UU will recycle office paper, corrugated cardboard, newspaper, glass, plastic, steel, aluminum, batteries, fluorescent bulbs, and other items.
- Rethink Purchasing. TJMC UU will continually strive to increase the amount of environmentally preferable products and services purchased for church use. In order to find environmentally preferable products, TJMC UU will analyze price, quality, and availability in addition to environmental benefits.

Reminders and Communication. In order to support this covenant, the Green Sanctuary Task Force will facilitate broad communication with church members and will be available to provide technical assistance to church committees, board liaisons, and other as needed.

Timeline for Completion: Task Force representatives have met with the Board, three of six Councils, and the Finance Committee have had discussions, several more will be scheduled in January 2012.

Leads: Sharon Baiocco et al.

Project Title: Car-Pooling Plan for TJMC Sunday Services

Project Description: Our church has over 400 members and only limited parking space in an urban neighborhood. We planned to identify congregants living in proximity (perhaps by zip code), and survey them about their Sunday service preference (9:15 a.m. or 11:15 a.m.). Then we would invite them to form carpools to church, not only to conserve energy, but to build community and reduce parking congestion in our neighborhood.

Outcomes: Drew up maps and initiated carpooling sign-ups at tabling during social hours. Held four Carpool Challenge Sundays, one in spring and three in the fall of 2011. 50 Members participated in the fall. A drawing was held each time, with more than 30 prizes awarded.

Timeline for Completion: Ongoing. One more Carpool Challenge will be held in January 2012 and at least twice a year hereafter.

Leads: Johanna Woodchild, Glenn Short

Project Title: Ethical Eating Initiative

Project Description: Our national church offers marvelous resources on ethical eating, such as the new guide offered by the UUA. We planned to visit local farms and to launch a series of conversations about food -- growing it, preparing it, and eating it. We had begun this project in 2007 when we toured internationally renowned Polyface Farm in the Shenandoah Valley. This project replaced one on plastic bag legislation which did not generate enough interest.

Outcomes: We offered tours of three farms -- an urban community garden; a sheep farm in Nelson County, in conjunction with the Sierra Club; and a tour of Bellair Farm CSA with a free local food lunch in October 2011 where we distributed an introduction to the GA Statement of

Conscience on Ethical Eating. In May 2011 we organized and prepared a Mother's Day Mother Earth Brunch to educate cooks and diners about choices of local, organic, and non-factory farm raised meats. We made and served over 250 healthy brunches. In fall 2011, we helped promote and supported the program of another TJMC group, Uppitiiy Women, "Preserving the Harvest," with a speaker about how to save and store local, fresh food. (20) We have begun to explore how to introduce food composting into the church kitchen users' behavior, and have researched which new compost receptacle to purchase with funds we have reserved for it. (Outside compost bins have been completed, but food composting is forbidden except in closed containers in the City of Charlottesville.) Education regarding composting continues. One of the issues we have not resolved is who will be responsible for monitoring the composter.

Timeline for Completion: We expect to have a policy, procedure, and receptacle ready for April 2012. We expect to launch a "Soup Club" in February/March 2012.

Leads: Deborah Judson-Ebbets, Nancy Hurrelbrinck, Charlotte Balkenbush

Additional

Project Title: Green Lending Library and Film Series

Project Description: Created and publicized a library of print and media resources related to the environment. Scheduled and promoted environmental films each year with the Social Action Film Series. Included library resources on monthly "tables" in the Social Hall between services.

Outcomes: Purchased and displayed four new videos, storage trays, etc. for materials.

Developed check-out policies and forms. Offered three films during the 2010-2011 Social Action Film Series: "Food Inc.," "Full Signal," and "Blue Gold: Water Wars."

Timeline for Completion: Library created summer 2010; films scheduled for fall 2010, and each year thereafter. Unfortunately, the Social Action Film Series has been discontinued,

Leads: Mickey and Arthur Meyer, Glenn Short

Project Title: Green Outings & Socials

Project Description: Offered environmental events jointly with other organizations such as the Sierra Club. These might include a speaker, bike ride, hike, tour, local and organic potluck, or film presentation and discussion.

Outcomes: Sponsored a committee Wearin' O the Green party with Green Corps at Grady's Irish Pub on St. Patrick's Day 2010 (10); "Cover Crops in the Garden" video offered with a local, organic potluck July 2011, in partnership with Transition Charlottesville/Albemarle (35). We sponsored the free use of church space for monthly meetings by Transition Charlottesville/Albemarle, which always include a local, organic potluck. Transition Charlottesville/Albemarle has the goal of promoting a strong local community that can be self-sustaining as peak oil inevitably drives prices higher and climate change floods the Virginia coast. Three of our Green Sanctuary members are active in the organization, which was launched in January 2011. We also joined with Wise Energy for Virginia and Appalachian Voices to promote and attend a dinner and Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s film, "The Last Mountain," in Staunton, VA.(11)

Timeline for Completion: Ongoing. We are planning a "Wearin' O' the Green" social to celebrate (we hope) our accreditation in March, near St. Patrick's Day.

Leads: Nancy Hurrelbrinck, Deborah Judson-Ebbets, Glenn Short

Accomplishment of Program Goals

Goal: Build Awareness

Through our regular communications with the congregation and through our education programs, the Green Sanctuary Task Force built increased awareness of the significance and complexity of environmental issues. At least twice a month, we staffed a table displaying information about an environmental issue or project and invited members to join our Green e-lists. Our tables have included an introduction to the Green Sanctuary requirements, our Green Library and Videos, Advocacy for the Energy Bill, Advocacy Against Mountaintop Removal Coal Mining, our Trip to West Virginia, Carpooling, Farm Tours, our Green Sanctuary Arboretum, and our Final Report. As a result of these efforts and more, we now have as many as 50 UUs signed up for our two Green e-lists, one which is for those who just want to receive notices about church Green events, and one which is for those who seek information about environmental issues in general. In addition, we post important announcements on our group Facebook site, which reaches 216 of our members.

With our large membership, our church has so many councils, groups, and events that it is difficult to get attention, especially for new programs and events. We have a monthly church Bulletin, now primarily distributed online, where we have published announcements, reports, and articles, but space is still limited there, and it is not accessible to everyone. Consequently, we turned to the weekly Friday email from the church administrator and the Sunday Bulletin, inserted into the service program, to connect with the congregation on a continuing basis. We obtained space on our Board's bulletin board to post announcements. Finally, we published our own printed 4-page newsletter twice a year and created web pages on our church web site where we could share reports, photos, and information about our programs. Our final report, "[Green Sanctuary Video Report](#)," is posted on YouTube and linked to our [Green Sanctuary Web Page](#). Every week web announcements are sent to church members who subscribe to the TJMC web.

Our members also interacted regularly with staff and leaders of the councils to coordinate programming and seek advice. Our action team, the Environmental Action group, is part of the Social Action Council, which meets quarterly, and we also worked closely with both the Buildings and the Grounds chairs in the Administrative Council as we worked on energy efficiency and our tree stewardship project. Three of our active members comprise half of the Facilities Planning Task Force of the Board, with the other half being Board members; consequently, we have had a major influence on the planning for the future of our building renovations and/or expansion. As we planned worship services and education programs, we coordinated with the Worship Council and Religious Education staff, thus achieving a synergy and introducing green initiatives into their regular planning.

Even more than our communications, however, our programs always had an element of education, from the Mini-Green Workshops, the Earth Friendly Fridays, the local, organic potlucks, to the worship services and Religious Education courses and lessons, to the Social

Action film series and our Green Lending Library. Our congregation was receptive, and one by one, we gained their attention and their respect. When we led discussions of our Sustainability Covenant at each of the council meetings in fall 2011, council leaders told us that our greatest achievement was in “raising awareness.”

Goal: Encourage Personal Lifestyle Changes

Charlottesville, a university city surrounded by wineries, farms, and mountains, attracts people who respect Earth. The City and the County of Albemarle pride themselves on their environmental leadership, although the County does not always practice good stewardship. Even when we began our programming five years ago, numerous members of our congregation were well-educated about organic foods, toxins, and environmental policies. The church and its practices, however, were only modestly sustainable, and Virginia’s state government was, and is, even less concerned about the environment.

Historically, the Virginia legislature has been heavily influenced by developers, power corporations such as Dominion, and coal companies, such as the former Massey Coal. The Chesapeake Bay Watershed, our watershed, has been threatened for many years due to pig and chicken industrial farms and over-fishing. Our air is polluted by the old coal-fired power plants that dot the region and West Virginia, across the Blue Ridge to our west. We do not have adequate laws protecting streams, nor does the state ban plastic bags or mandate recycling, to name a few of Virginia’s environmental deficiencies. State government controls much of the land-use and development policies through the Dillon Rule, a 126-year-old Iowa court ruling upheld by the Supreme Court that limits the power of local communities. These are the contexts for our efforts to encourage personal lifestyle changes among our congregation.

Our goal has been to become a church community that leads in significant ways as a functioning model, incorporating environmentally sound principles into our daily lives and choices. We have produced a Sustainability Covenant to guide and inform our church leaders’ decisions and our members’ choices on how they might incorporate green considerations into their own lives. Through our sermons, workshops, courses, films, tabling, and library, we have provided hands-on and inspiring education to our members and the community, encouraging them to conserve energy, buy and eat local foods and products, and dispose of wastes sustainably. We introduced many highly visible energy conservation measures, such as turning off lights on sunny Sunday mornings, promoting recycling of plastics and single-stream recycling, building rain barrels, selling CFL lightbulbs, promoting a local home energy conservation contest, carpooling for single service Sundays, and sponsoring ethical eating potlucks and tours of our square-foot garden and Sacred Trees. All of these measures were designed to SHOW rather than TELL how to live more lightly on Earth.

In January this year we circulated a “Green Sanctuary Survey of Individual Sustainability Practices,” and the results show that our congregation has taken our messages to heart. Over 87% of those who responded (70) (1) turn off lights to conserve, (2) set their thermostat low in winter, high in summer, (3) limit use of plastic bags, and (4) recycle newspapers, metal cans, and

glass jars. The same percentage or more agree with the statements that “Americans will have to change their patterns of consumption significantly due to climate change, more expensive fossil-fuels, and human population growth.” Over two-thirds of those who responded indicated that our Green Sanctuary programs encouraged them to do more. Of these 47 people, more than 23% reported that they had increased their (1) carpooling, (2) buying organic and local food, (3) use of reusable bags, recycled paper products, and cloths for cleaning, and (4) avoidance of toxic cleaning products.

Goal: Engage in Community Action on Environmental Issues

When we began our work at TJMC in fall 2006, we had six or so dedicated environmentalists, and few partnerships with other environmental groups in the community. Our first leader was active in the local Sierra Club, so we began to partner with it to offer programs that might draw a crowd. The Sierra Club continues to co-sponsor activities with us, such as a tour of an ethical sheep farm (though this is still debatable depending on personal philosophy) and courses designed by the Northwest Earth Institute. Before we became a Green Sanctuary candidate, several of us attended a workshop on improving our church’s energy conservation sponsored by St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, which is within walking distance of TJMC. Over time, we developed a working relationship with environmentalists in that church, and the interfaith contacts we made there became the source of our “Interfaith Green Network,” which our Task Force Chair coordinates. Through it we keep in touch with environmentalists from five other local congregations.

In January 2010 we began advocacy for the national energy bill that subsequently failed by joining a national grassroots movement sponsored by the Sierra Club, “Green Energy Works,” where we partnered with Green Corps, a group of paid, trained young environmental activists. Through them, we attended a Clean Energy Forum where six of us trained to be better citizen lobbyists, and we staffed their call center for a time. For the past two years we have sent representatives to the Virginia Conservation Network Lobby Day in Richmond, where we learn about coordinated environmental efforts before the Virginia legislature. In spring 2010 we encouraged the Rev. Dr. Morris Hudgins to join select religious leaders from across the Commonwealth inviting other faith leaders to urge the Senate to pass federal climate change legislation, and we spoke to the Virginia groups of ministers and staff (VACCUM) about our Green Sanctuary initiatives. In the fall of 2010, we collected signatures during social hour in support of the energy legislation and mailed them to our senators and congressman, and about 70 of us joined Bill McKibben’s “Day of Climate Action, 2010” by participating in a photo for 350.org’s website.

One of our most significant community actions came out of an Earth Friendly Friday presentation we offered where leaders of “Transition Cities Staunton,” across the Blue Ridge from us, spoke about the international “Transition Cities” movement and their plan for launching the movement in Staunton, VA. Two of our members had joined an earlier unsuccessful local group to promote Charlottesville/Albemarle’s sustainability initiatives in response to Peak Oil and climate change. Subsequently, new Charlottesville leaders emerged, and they asked us for

free use of meeting space. Three of our members supported the initiative, so we became host to the renewed formation of a Charlottesville/Albemarle Transition Cities group, which holds meetings monthly in our building, and which plans to sponsor a weekend training workshop for other Transition Cities groups on the East Coast in February.

Goal: Strengthen the Connection Between Spiritual Practice and Earth Consciousness

This has been one of the most difficult goals for us, because we were working with interim ministers until this year, and they were extremely busy managing the ministerial search and pledge drives that were going on during our candidacy. Also, our single designated service, Earth Day Sunday, happened to be at the same time as our ministerial candidate's visits, so that both Sundays, before and after, were not ours to plan. Despite this, jointly with members of the worship council, we presented three powerful sermons to our congregation.

When our first ministerial candidate failed to come in April 2010, the Rev. Morris Hudgins and Sharon Baiocco, Green Sanctuary Chair, quickly collaborated to present a service on "Our Sacred Trees," which combined a talk about historical sacred trees, the Tree of Souls in the film *Avatar*, and tours of our TJMC Sacred Trees. Meanwhile, after returning from our trip to West Virginia's Kayford Mountain and learning more about mountaintop removal coal mining (MTR), one of our members, Laura Wallace, delivered a powerful sermon, "Healing the Gulf," that combined a message about MTR and the BP oil spill that summer. This sermon was selected by the UUA's Ministry for Earth for inclusion on the UUA website's Environmental Resources sermons page.

That fall, we invited and hosted guest ministers from West Virginia, the Rev. Rose Edington and the Rev. Mel Hoover, who delivered two sermons, one to our congregation, and one at our Vigil for the People and Mountains of Appalachia. Both of our fall vigils were beautiful candlelight ceremonies, open to the public on Sunday evenings. Through them, we informed and entertained approximately 140 attendees in uplifting music-and-art-filled vigil services, and we later we educated over 250 others at three other churches in Virginia.

On Earth Day Sunday 2011, we finally had a ministerial candidate, so we requested and were granted permission to have an environmentally-themed service on Mother's Day. Nancy Hurrelbrinck, another fine writer and speaker and a young mother, presented "What's the Story of Your Food?" and helped us launch our ethical eating initiative. The Mother Earth Brunch and celebration of local food that followed each service that day was our best-attended event, one which we intend to continue.

At another service, we introduced an award and recognition of TJMC "Eco-Heroes," and early in 2010, we were able to add a new ritual lighting of a green candle "to hold our hopes for peace and for the planet that we share" every Sunday. This fall, on a beautiful fall day, we held a dedication ceremony to bless the new TJMC Green Sanctuary Arboretum with the help of our new settled minister, the Rev. Erik Walker Wikstrom.

Goal: Work to Heal Environmental Injustices

As noted earlier, we are “blessed” with many opportunities to work to heal environmental injustices here in Virginia. One of our first actions was to attend and testify at a hearing of a Virginia senate committee in support of a stronger “stream-saver” bill. Coal industry spokespersons and coal miners presented their case against the bill in a room overflowing with passionate speakers, while we spoke in support of it, along with residents of Wise County (VA), the Garden Club, Appalachian Voices, who became close partners with us, and the Sierra Club. The bill died in committee, and we knew we had an uphill fight ahead.

Our trip to witness mountaintop removal coal mining for ourselves in June 2010 was, in retrospect, the key element in our more recent successes in gaining respect within our congregation and Charlottesville. It bound our group of 12 activists together intimately as we came to understand the impact of MTR on the people and the environment nearby. When we surveyed our congregation in January, over two-thirds of the respondents reported that their understandings of the environmental issues of extraction of natural resources, and particularly, mountaintop removal coal mining, had changed. During our candidacy, we have also reached out to other churches, speaking about MTR to two other UU congregations in Virginia, to a St. Paul’s Episcopal audience, and to the Green Sanctuary workshop audience at General Assembly in Charlotte.

Our Green Sanctuary “Broad Scope” e-list receives several messages a week forwarded by members of our Task Force through the Task Force Chair. Topics range from energy bills to mining uranium, to the new Earth justice curriculum sponsored by the UUMFE. Often the chair will also forward messages to the e-list from the UUA Green Sanctuary e-list, as well as requests in support of energy and environmental legislation and non-profits.

Members of our congregation turned out in large numbers for a county legislative board meeting where conservatives proposed rejecting a \$1 million grant from the federal government to promote cooperation between the city and the county to develop a sustainability plan. The board eventually decided to keep the grant, but reject membership in the United Nations’ resource for evaluating data that would have assisted the planning -- a partial victory.

Others in our congregation have demonstrated locally and in the state and nation’s capitals in support of an environmental issue or against an environmental degradation. For example, we demonstrated locally with Appalachian Voices and teens from our local high school against the fossil-fuel based energy decisions of the shareholders of the Dominion Power Company. We met in Richmond with aides of our two U.S. senators, accompanied by friends from the Sierra Club and other environmental groups, to protest MTR and threats to the EPA’s Clean Water Act. Finally, members from our groups rallied in Washington, D.C. to protest the XL Pipeline and mountaintop removal coal mining. Our strong partnerships with other environmental groups afford us many opportunities to demonstrate in support of environmental justice.

Program Evaluation

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?

During our discussions to evaluate our programming with church leaders in fall 2011, they overwhelmingly reported that our greatest accomplishment has been to raise awareness of environmental issues and to show the congregation how to live more sustainably. They told us that our modeling and guidance on how to adapt activities for the church and how to be more ecologically sound in their personal lives were very helpful. Changing the practices of the church, including improving the facilities to be more energy efficient by collecting rainwater, replacing light fixtures, insulating, and sealing leaks tangibly demonstrated what could be done. Our success at reaching a reduction of energy consumption goal of 15%, while not as high as we had hoped, was still very impressive, particularly to the Finance Committee.

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

We have completed our Action Plan at a difficult time for any congregation -- we were adapting to the loss of two popular ministers, beginning what would become a three-year ministerial search, and adjusting to two different interim ministers. The Board was preoccupied with staffing and budget problems, and the interim ministers were understandably not particularly focused on our work. Cutbacks forced reductions in personnel, and church leaders had their hands full with the preparations for a new minister and the disappointment resulting from our first failed search.

On the other hand, a perennially difficult problem, which actually speaks well of our congregation, is that there are so many activities going on simultaneously. Over 70 groups connected to the church continue to function, even as the church organizational authority becomes more distributed through the councils. Competing with many well-established worship, social action and educational programs to get publicity and attention was difficult. We had to share bulletin board space, appeal for space for articles in the print newsletter, and compete for tabling space in a crowded Social Hall. Now we are a regular fixture in the church's culture, with a budget line and connections to all the major councils.

Even with that success, we have found that changing behaviors is not easy. We launched an initiative to discuss our Sustainability Covenant with major groups and councils to reinforce our goal of transforming our practices and become a "beacon" of sustainability in our community. Our most recent projects which have focused on ethical eating have drawn much more popular support and participation, and we believe we are on the right track to engage the congregation, but we still have much to do in the church kitchen to educate groups who serve food about sustainable practices. We did receive unanimous support from the Community Life Council when we introduced the idea of composting our table scraps, and we expect to develop policy and procedures and purchase a sealed container composter (as required by the city) this spring, while also inserting lessons into the Religious Education curricula.

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?

We have observed changes in both the decision-makers at the church and in the regular members. When we first approached the Finance Committee three years ago for a budget line, they were not enthusiastic. But the success of our facilities' updating has prompted the Board to become more receptive to replacing inefficient doors and windows, including our main entrance, which should be installed soon at a cost of over \$6000. In addition, the Board listened and responded with interest to a recent proposal to install solar panels on our flat roof as a way of reducing our energy consumption over time. A transferred grant to the church of \$25,000 by a member of our Task Force and local rebates have made the idea attractive, but funding and time constraints may prevent us from acting on this. The minister has encouraged the Board to be bold. We shall see!

Another example of change in our culture was in the response of our Board to a proposal to work with Relay Foods, a local foods distributor, and more recently with Bellair Farm CSA. Both companies asked to partner with us and use our parking lots for pick-ups, with the church receiving a small percentage of income. This has prompted much discussion about how we support local businesses, fairness, etc., and a review of our SCRIP program sales as well. The Board did agree to let Relay Foods table for a while, and to allow Bellair Farm to use our parking lot for three days in October, but the issue continues under debate. The Green Sanctuary Task Force believes we are educating our church leaders about supporting sustainable agriculture (as per our national conversations), but we also have to consider fundraising and former agreements.

Before our candidacy, there was no place in our county to recycle plastics #3 through #7. Subsequently, we created collection bins at the church and two of our members carted the plastics, which grew from one bin to four over time due to increased volume, to the adjacent county where a recycling business accepted the plastics. Just two years ago a new single-stream recycling center opened nearby, and local garbage haulers began to collect in many neighborhoods and deliver to that new center. We investigated and discovered that one hauler would collect our TJMC waste at no cost to us, because we were a non-profit, and take it to the single-stream center. This saved the church \$1800 annually. We have encouraged our members to follow our example and hire a hauler who uses single-stream recycling. (This business was seriously vandalized in 2010, showing how much resistance there is in Virginia.)

Finally, church leaders told us they thought our carpooling project was very visible and successful. We began our carpooling project one Sunday last spring, with only modest initial response. During three Sundays in the fall, however, we averaged nearly two persons per car, a significant improvement from two people every fifth car in the spring. More than 50 individuals participated, with many carpooling more than once. Our project leaders reported, "Everyone loved winning a prize, even if it was relatively small. Many people expressed their feeling of enjoyment over the whole carpool initiative." This is a significant change in our church culture. There are only 120 parking spaces in our lots and around the church and more than 400 adult

members, so carpooling may be the way to overcome the #1 limit on our church's growth, (parking space), as well as to promote energy conservation.

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

We have discussed what form our group should take and its place in our congregation's organizational structure with Board members. We are seeking to become a standing committee of the Board or the Social Action Council after we have achieved accreditation, as we continue our work dedicated to increasing awareness about personal and institutional choices that increase sustainability. We do not anticipate any resistance, except that we will have to formally dissolve the Green Sanctuary Task Force, merge it with the Environmental Action group, and reconstitute ourselves, with budget and policy-recommending authority as the Green Sanctuary Committee.

While our major projects have been completed, we plan to continue working on the last "bastion" of unsustainable practices, the church kitchen, in the spring. We plan to introduce composting food and to work with the Finance Committee, which is planning to move to bulk purchasing, to assure that good choices are made in church supplies. We will continue to sponsor programs, such as a "soup group" we have been discussing, more carpooling dates, and continue to support our partnerships with Transition Cities/Charlottesville/Albemarle, with Appalachian Voices, and with the Sierra Club.

A while ago the pagan-themed Nature Spirit group in our congregation disbanded, but it has recently reformed, and we hope to do some joint programming with them. We are working with our new minister to familiarize him with eco-justice issues, and we will continue to offer at least two environmentally-themed worship services a year. We continue to discuss RE programs for adults and children with the Director of Religious Education. Three of us serve on the Facilities Planning Task Force, and we will be busy and influential in redesigning our spaces to make them more energy efficient as well as functional. With less pressure to complete specific projects, we can, perhaps, listen better to the needs of our congregation and community, and be more flexible in meeting them.

What ongoing 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?

Our work has inspired, motivated and sometimes frustrated and saddened us, but has left us more dedicated to protecting Earth through sustainable decisions and actions to educate and inspire others. We have worked to influence decisions behind the many threats to the safety of our vulnerable air, water and food resources, and promoted sustainable sources of energy and less destructive use of existing resources. Our goal is encouraging preservation of the intricate balance of the natural world to conserve the beauty and bounty of Earth for future generations.

Over the past five years we have created a network of friends who are environmentalists within the community and UU congregations in West Virginia and Virginia. We have collaborated

online with the Greater Washington (D.C.) Interfaith Power and Light, and with the Chesapeake Potomac UUs, and we have met with legislators and legislative aides. Recently, one of our long-time TJMC members, Satyendra Huja, was chosen to be Charlottesville's mayor, and the former mayor, now a city councilman, also attends our church. One of our members has served on the local and state boards of the Sierra Club, and others are active as Master Naturalists and Master Gardeners. All of these activities and relationships have given our congregation some stature in the community as a leader in environmental awareness and eco-justice. We hope to expand and strengthen our Interfaith Green Network by visiting with more local churches and offering them programs, for example, on eco-justice and sustaining our spirits during what looks to be a very long environmental movement. The Green Sanctuary designation will facilitate our continuing leadership in support of our 7th Principle and ecojustice.