



## ***The Path to EarthCare & EarthCare Program***

Unity EarthCare Ministry Team

Website: [www.unityworldwideministries.org/earthcare](http://www.unityworldwideministries.org/earthcare)

Contact: [earthcare@unity.org](mailto:earthcare@unity.org)

### **Overview**

The *Path to EarthCare* and *EarthCare Program* is the platform upon which all Unity EarthCare Team (UET) programs, services and resources are based, not just the certification process outlined herein. Its purpose is to assist spiritual centers in integrating an Earth-oriented spirituality into their ministry. As such, it manifests Unity's Fifth Basic Principle: *Through thoughts, words, and actions we live the truth we know.*

The **Path to EarthCare** is a way for each congregation to discover what Spirit calls them to do to care for our Earth home and our co-inhabitants. There are seven steps and eight actions on the **Path, as described below:**

### **Steps:**

- 1. Pray, 2. Vision, 3. Inspire, 4. Educate, 5. Act, 6. Share, 7. Reaffirm**

### **Step 5 Actions:**

- 1. Energy Audit, 2. Energy/Water Conservation, 3. Waste Minimization, 4. Recycling, 5. Conservation of Natural Resources, 6. Honoring the Interdependent Web of Creation, 7. Environmental & Social Justice, 8. Mindful Eating**

The EarthCare Program guides congregations along the *Path to EarthCare* for congregations that wish to integrate an Earth-oriented spirituality into its ministries. This includes certification, the Green Star Award and other programs of Unity EarthCare.

There are three different levels of achievement under the certification process,, each of which requires a greater degree of commitment. They are:

**Level A: EarthCare Covenant**

**Level B: EarthCare Commitment**

**Level C: EarthCare Fulfillment**

# *The Path to EarthCare*

## *Steps and Actions*

### **1. Pray**

Prayer creates a consciousness for inspiration, guidance and community. Prayer will guide your ministry to express its unique vision of caring for the earth and creation.

### **2. Vision**

Vision defines the purpose, critical processes and goals of the **EarthCare Program**. The result can be a vision statement, mission statement or covenant to care for creation to guide your ministry.

- ▶ A covenant is a sacred trust. It expresses the ministry's vision for care of creation and an Intention to take actions that express the vision. It should be considered a pact between the congregation and Spirit.
- ▶ A vision statement is an affirmation that concentrates on the future, is a source of inspiration and provides clear decision making criteria. A vision statement sets the direction for future planning.
- ▶ A mission statement defines the purpose, critical processes and goals of the EarthCare program.

Examples of each are on the both the EarthCare website and our Facebook page, under the Resources section entitled, **Sample Vision, Covenants, Vision Statements, Mission Statements and Action Plans**.

We also encourage ministries to create a brief **Action Plan**. An action plan outlines the ways the leadership and congregation intend to express an earth care consciousness in the life of the ministry.

### **3. Inspire**

Through prayers, songs and special ceremonies, divine ideas will blossom into creative and meaningful expressions of caring for the earth and creation. This will be expressed as an Action Plan.

### **4. Educate**

Education is a key component to fully comprehend and understand the complexities of environmental and social justice issues, as related to the earth and creation.

### **5. Act**

Right action will follow based upon the needs and vision of the community to care for the earth and creation. The actions may be simple or complex, contained solely within the ministry or in conjunction with other community activities. Act Step actions are as follows:

**5.1 Energy/Environmental Audit.** An **energy audit** assesses all aspects of energy usage, while an **environmental audit** is a comprehensive analysis of the building, grounds, lighting, water use, HVAC (heating, ventilation, air conditioning) and business operations. Either is acceptable. Many local energy suppliers provide energy only audits for free. There are formats on the EarthCare webpage that you can use to conduct either an abbreviated or comprehensive in-house environmental audit.

**5.2 Energy/Water Conservation.** Perhaps the single greatest human activity affecting global climate change is the production of carbon dioxide through the extensive use of fossil fuels. Reducing our rate of use of these traditional energy sources through the conservation of these resources lowers utility bills and help preserve ecological systems as well as human cultures.

**TRY:** implement recommendations of energy audits to reduce heat and electric bills; sell CFL or LED light bulbs; promote car-pooling, walking/bicycling, or using public transit.

Water conservation is becoming a critical issue in many areas due to effect of climate change. A few examples include: No till or minimal till farming, brown water recovery systems, government water use restrictions, catch storm drain runoff systems and select plantings that are native or other low water plants.

**5.3 Waste Minimization.** Over-consumption contributes to pollution and to our landfills. What we purchase and consume are votes for those goods and services. Decisions to "reduce" and "reuse" are powerful spiritual statements of environmental responsibility, both for ourselves and the larger community. Be a mindful consumer of goods purchased or food wasted: Reduce, reuse and repurpose!

**5.4 Recycling.** A recycling program or connecting with existing programs is an easy way for congregations to take meaningful environmental action on a limited budget.

**5.5 Conservation of Natural Resources.** Adopt, maintain, promote or protect one of our Earth's ecosystems and resources. Examples include parks, trails, streams, neighborhoods, streets/highway, cemetery, beach, or conservation areas either directly or in partnership with other organizations.

**5.6 Honor the Interdependent Web of Creation.** Undertake actions that represent a renewed reverence and respect for all forms of life as well as the interdependent web of creation. By replacing policies and practices that are detrimental to the environment with behaviors that demonstrate respect for the interconnectedness of creation, our consciousness comes into deeper alignment with divine mind and more fully expresses the Vision of EarthCare. Some examples include sacred rituals and periodically hosting movies, symposiums, workshops and presentations that promote a better understanding of our interconnectedness with one another, all living things and the web of creation.

**5.7 Environmental and Social Justice.** Climate change is an issue resulting in both environmental degradation and social injustice. As such, EarthCare's vision is of an environmentally just world that is free from oppression and discrimination. It is one that provides worthy and fair treatment of all humanity irrespective of race color, creed, income, place of origin, or gender identity. Social Justice also applies to all non-human sentient beings, who not only have a right to freedom from ecological destruction but a moral entitlement to just treatment.

As stated in *Jesus Christ Heals*, by Charles Fillmore: *We all intuitively know there is something wrong in a world where poverty, suffering, and sorrow prevail. We would not, any of us, create such a world. We all want to see these things blotted out in this world.*

**5.8 Mindful Eating.** Help restore our sacred relationships with the earth, animals, and all creation by raising consciousness that our food choices are a spiritual practice that promotes care for both ourselves and the earth. Mindful Eating goes beyond that which we put in our mouths. It involves expanding our understanding of, connection with and reverence for every thing associated with the food chain and its interrelationship with all of creation. A complete description of Mindful Eating, with examples, can be found on the EarthCare website.

**There are many more examples of things you can do under each of these areas. Please go to the UWM EarthCare Page or our Facebook Page (See links below). Look under the Resources section for the document entitled, *EarthCare Steps and Actions: Suggestions/Opportunities*.**

**6. Share**

As ministries share their achievements, within the ministry and to the community at-large, the EarthCare goals and accomplishments expand outward exponentially through connection and networking.

**7. Re-affirm**

Through sacred ceremony/ritual, a ministry is able to re-affirm its EarthCare covenant on an annual basis, thereby kindling enthusiasm and zeal for this most sacred work. It also provides an opportunity to reassess where the program has been and where it may lead in the future. Celebrate annually EarthCare's accomplishment in a ceremony to help vision your future objectives, goals & activities.

## EarthCare Program

The EarthCare Program can be used for a number of purposes, including becoming certified as an EarthCare Congregation, the Green Star Award and other programs within the EarthCare Ministry. The EarthCare Program guides congregations along the *Path to EarthCare*.

### CERTIFICATION

There are three levels of certification, each of which requires a greater degree of commitment. While most congregations start with Level A, any track may be chosen. A Notice of Achievement is required for each level completed. However, if more than one level is applied for at the same time, only one Notice of Achievement is required. If pursuing certification, please collect documentation including photos, fliers or bulletins of your projects and efforts.

#### **Level A: EarthCare Covenant**

Completing this level fulfills the **Pray and Vision steps** by creating a covenant, vision and/or mission statement to the care of the earth. Through prayer & meditation, the leadership and congregation will create a covenant, which must be adopted by the board of directors. Share your sacred Covenant with the entire congregation. It also is recommended that an action plan be created to implement the vision of your covenant. Please send a copy of the covenant with your Notice of Achievement.

### **Level B: EarthCare Commitment**

Level B provides guidance for church communities to further their commitment to EarthCare. It requires completion of **four steps** and **three actions of the Act Step**. If Level A has already been achieved, the **Pray** and **Vision** steps are fulfilled. If not, Level A is required at this time. Please describe each Step and Action that was completed, along with appropriate documentation as applicable. Also discuss the status and future plans of your environmental program, if applicable. Provide a copy of your covenant and/or vision & mission statements along with the Notice of Achievement. Finally, discuss the status and future plans of your environmental program.

### **Level C: EarthCare Fulfillment**

Completion of Level C means the congregation has cultivated a comprehensive earth oriented spirituality that touches the entire ministry, both spiritually and in practical actions. This level requires completion of **all seven Steps of the Path** and **six of eight actions** of the **Act Step**. Please describe and each Step and Action that was completed along with documentation as appropriate. Please note that an Energy/Environmental Audit is mandatory at this level. Finally, discuss the status and future plans of your environmental program.

### **Program Flexibility**

All spiritual centers, including evolving ministries, can participate in the certification process whether or not they own their facility or have a from-the-pulpit ministry. We recognize that not every step or action may be appropriate for some ministries, therefore alternatives may be substituted with prior approval. Please contact your regional coordinator or the program coordinator to discuss this prior to submission.

### **Notice of Achievement**

Upon completion of each level, submit a Notice of Achievement to [earthcare@unity.org](mailto:earthcare@unity.org) . If more than one level is being applied for at the same time, only one notice is required.

### **Certificate of Achievement**

Upon completion of each level, the congregation will receive a Certificate of Achievement. In addition, the ministry will be recognized on both the UWM website, at the annual Unity People's Conference and in other publications.

### **GREEN STAR AWARD**

The Green Star Award recognizes Unity congregations that have completed at least three significant environmental activities in the preceding calendar year. The activities must foster awareness of our spiritual oneness with the Earth and promote active care of creation for the environment. They also need to correlate to one of the seven steps and/or eight actions of the *Path to EarthCare*. The applications must be supported by appropriate documentation. Examples include videos, pictures, newspaper articles, announcements, brochures, etc. Although the minimum is three, congregations can submit as many as they like.

The award is available to ALL Unity congregations, whether or not they have been certified under the EarthCare Program. Application is available online and deadline is in the spring.

### **Ongoing Support & Resources**

The EarthCare Team offers a number of services and resources to assist you. While some of our services are listed below, for a complete list go to our website ( [www.unityworldwideministries.org/earthcare](http://www.unityworldwideministries.org/earthcare)) or our Facebook Page ([www.facebook.com/UnityEarthCare](https://www.facebook.com/UnityEarthCare)) and find the document entitled,

## **“Unity EarthCare Services and Resources.”**

**Regional Coordinators.** Each Unity region has been assigned a coordinator from the EarthCare Team to assist congregations in any way possible. Go to [www.unityworldwideministries.org/earthcare](http://www.unityworldwideministries.org/earthcare) for the current list.

### **Monthly Collaborative calls**

Contact Mary at [agreatpickle@hotmail.com](mailto:agreatpickle@hotmail.com).

### **Facebook Page**

Discover the timely resources and interchange of ideas that are on EarthCare’s Facebook page. Go to: [www.facebook.com/UnityEarthCare](http://www.facebook.com/UnityEarthCare)

### **YouTube Channel**

Numerous videos are available on [EarthCare’s YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC4iYARFqsqLhuodoDC52R5Q/playlists) to provide a wealth of information in the areas of Social Justice, Educational, Spiritual, Poems and Inspiration, and Music. Go to: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC4iYARFqsqLhuodoDC52R5Q/playlists>.

### **EarthCare Connections Newsletter**

Published quarterly, the newsletter includes timely articles and news regarding the environmental movement and Unity EarthCare. Go to the EarthCare webpage.

### **The Path**

EarthCare frequently contributes to Unity Worldwide Ministries, *The Path* e-newsletter. The Path provides quick updates on events, board decisions, and policies, as well as links to timely articles of interest to Unity ministers, licensed teachers, staff, board members and ministry lay leaders. It is published *twice a month* on the first and third Thursdays, and any Unity leader may subscribe by going to <https://www.unityworldwideministries.org/publications>



## Notice of Achievement

This Notice signifies that on \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_\_, the

\_\_\_\_\_ Board / Governing body  
of \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Spiritual Center / Church

Select one: \_\_\_\_\_ Regular Ministry \_\_\_\_\_ Virtual Ministry \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate Ministry  
has completed the following levels of the **EarthCare Program**:

- \_\_\_ **Level A: EarthCare Covenant - Attach a copy of your Covenant, vision statement or mission statement.**
- \_\_\_ **Level B: EarthCare Commitment – Describe the four (4) Steps and three (3) actions that have been completed, with documentation as appropriate. If Level A has already been achieved, the Pray and Vision steps are fulfilled. If not, Level A is required at this time. Also discuss the status and future plans of your environmental program, if applicable.**
- \_\_\_ **Level C: EarthCare Fulfillment – Describe the seven (7) steps and six (6) actions that have been completed, with documentation as appropriate. If you are going directly to Level C and have not yet completed Level A, it is required at this time. Also discuss the status and future plans of your environmental program.**

### Levels B and C Only

Provide details, with appropriate support (including photos, bulletins, flyers & minutes) for each step and action that has been completed.

***Our ministry has completed the following Steps and actions of The Path to EarthCare:***

#### Steps

- Pray:** We have created a consciousness for **EarthCare** work through prayer.
- Vision:** We have formulated our vision through a covenant, vision statement or mission statement.

- Inspire:** We have maintained a sacred space for creation through Sunday services and special ceremonies.
- Educate:** We have sponsored educational activities within the church and within the community.
- Act:** See the Actions below.
- Share:** We have shared **EarthCare** within our local community.
- Re-affirm:** We have periodically renewed, re-assessed, and celebrated our vision.
  
- Level B:** We have completed the following **three** actions:
  - 1. Conducted and substantially implemented the recommendations of an Energy or Environmental Audit.
  - 2. Energy/Water Conservation.
  - 3. Waste Minimization.
  - 4. Conservancy of Natural Resources.
  - 5. Recycling.
  - 6. Interdependent Web of Creation.
  - 7. Environmental Justice and animal social justice.
  - 8. Mindful Eating. A complete description of Mindful Eating can be found on the EarthCare website.
  - Other. This activity may be used to replace one of the above actions with program approval. Please describe in detail.
  
- Level C:** We have completed the following **six** actions:
  - 1. Conducted and substantially implemented the recommendations of an Energy or Environmental Audit. **(Required for Level C).**
  - 2. Energy/Water Conservation.
  - 3. Waste Minimization.
  - 4. Conservancy of Natural Resources.
  - 5. Recycling.
  - 6. Interdependent Web of Creation.
  - 7. Environmental Justice and animal social justice.
  - 8. Mindful Eating. A complete description of Mindful Eating can be found on the EarthCare website.
  - Other. This activity may be used to replace one of the above actions with program approval. Please describe in detail.

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Special circumstances/reasons make it impossible to implement the following item(s) on the checklist. Please describe the reason and the type of action you would like to replace it. Please contact the EarthCare Program Coordinator or your regional coordinator to discuss prior to submitting.

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There are detailed descriptions & examples in *EarthCare Steps and Actions, Suggestions and Opportunities*, at the EarthCare website: [www.unityworldwideministries.org/earthcare](http://www.unityworldwideministries.org/earthcare)

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Church/Spiritual Center Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City

\_\_\_\_\_  
State

\_\_\_\_\_  
Zip

Website: \_\_\_\_\_, Phone No.: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Senior Minister / Spiritual Leader signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
President/Chair of Governing Body signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Print Name*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Print Name*

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

EARTHCARE Core ONLY:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Regional Coordinator Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Program Coordinator Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

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Signature