



## 2020 Green Star Awardees Summary of Activities

- A. Unity of the Blue Ridge, Mills Creek, NC (5)
- B. First Unity Spiritual Campus of St. Petersburg, FL (4)
- C. Unity Church of Overland Park, KS (4)
- D. Unity of Charleston, SC (5)

**Full Name of Congregation:** Unity of the Blue Ridge  
**Address (Street):** 2014 Old Fanning Bridge Road  
**Address (P.O. Box):**  
**Address (City, State, ZIP Code):** Mills River, NC 28759  
**Telephone No.:** 828-891-8700  
**Website:** [unityblueridge.org](http://unityblueridge.org)  
**Senior Minister/Spiritual Leader:** Rev. Darlene Strickland

### 1) Education of Sustainability Practices Program for our Unity Congregation

We have continued educating our congregation with our education program begun in 2016. It is designed to promote environmental awareness and information on sustainability practices. As before, we are focused on reducing waste. Important points regarding the topic are put on a one-page summary and then posted in the bathroom stalls and other prominent places. It includes ideas the congregation can implement for their own use.

An example of one of our educational summary sheets on the effects of using disposable cups for coffee and/or tea follows:

### 2) Earth Day Celebration in August

Because April 22nd this year fell on the day after Easter, we decided to have our Earth Day celebration in August. On Sunday, August 25, 2019, Rev. Darlene gave an inspirational talk about climate change which was especially poignant with the burning of the Amazon Rainforest. Scott Hardin-Nieri, Director of Creation Care Alliance of Western North Carolina attended our services. Creation Care Alliance is “a network of people of faith and congregations who have united around a moral and spiritual call to preserve the integrity, beauty and health of God’s creation.”

Scott presented Unity of The Blue Ridge with a certificate honoring our partnership with them in the struggle for right relationship with our neighbors and our planet. At the end of the service, Rev. Darlene announced that she hoped that this would “be your last straw” and the Unity Sustainability team gave everyone in the congregation a packet containing two reusable bamboo straws and a cleaning brush, embossed with our Unity logo.

### 3) Electronic Waste (E-waste) Recycling Drive

In our continued effort to reduce waste, we held an electronic waste (e-waste) recycling drive this fall. It ran for approximately 3 weeks. We placed boxes for the items in a prominent place in our lobby, and posted information on what we could recycle, as well as included an insert in our bulletin. We collected old cell phones, ink cartridges, ipads, tablets, GPS systems, etc. We sent everything off to Planet Green Recycles and actually raised some funds from the item. This recycling drive was so successful that by popular demand, we plan to run it again later this year.

The next page is the flyer as to what was and was not collectible. We also gave information to folks on what to do with items we could not take.

### 4) Re-purpose Event

Our Unity Sustainability Team (US Team) held a “re-purpose” event on March 24, 2019. This event encouraged the congregation to bring gently used unwanted items to Unity for someone else to take home and use, thus eliminating waste. In exchange, the congregants were encouraged to make a love offering to the US Team.

### 5) Drawdown Presentation

In February, 2 of our congregants, Pam and Charley Rogers (who are also presenters of the Pachamama Alliance Awakening The Dreamer) presented an introduction to Drawdown to our Unity Sustainability Team. We were all very inspired to hear about "the most comprehensive plan ever proposed to reverse global warming." We had group discussions on what we felt we could each do to help reverse global warming. We all left the meeting feeling extremely hopeful and were full of ideas of what we can do to help move it along.

### ONGOING ACTIONS

- 1) **Reducing Restroom Waste** (i.e., hand dryers & cloth hand towels).
- 2) **Adopt A Highway** (care for a one-mile section of highway).
- 3) **Partner in the Charter for Compassion International** (A global organization devoted to bringing compassionate action to life in practical ways. Designated as a "Compassionate Congregation, directing efforts into our youth education through curriculum and our adult education through community outreach activities).
- 4) **Sustainable Kitchen Practices.**
- 5) **Affiliation with the first Conservation Burial Ground in North Carolina** Placed a conservation on 11 acres of their land that contains a cemetery & sold it to Carolina Memorial Sanctuary. Help eliminate invasive plants & restore the site with native plant species. Burials utilize only biodegradable caskets or shrouds, no embalming, no steel or concrete and all graves are hand dug. The Sanctuary is open to the public and offers environmental education.
- 6) **Sustainability Tips.** Weekly e-newsletter continues to include a section on sustainability tips and ideas for the congregation.

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### First Unity Spiritual Campus of St, Petersburg

460 46<sup>th</sup> Ave North

St Petersburg FL 33703

Telephone No.: 727-527-2222

Website: [www.firstunity.org](http://www.firstunity.org)

Senior Minister/Spiritual Leader: Rev. Dr. Temple Hayes

[reverendtemple@firstunity.org](mailto:reverendtemple@firstunity.org)

727.527.2222 Ext #1

**Activity 1:** Introduction to *Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming* by Paul Hawken.

**Description:** First Unity EarthCare hosted the premier Introduction to Drawdown event in the Tampa Bay region on January 27, 2019. Approximately 80 people, from the Spiritual Campus and the community came together at the First Unity Friendship (LaGattuta) Hall in St. Petersburg for this three-hour event to explore a personal, community and collective response to global warming. The event was inspired by the book *Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming* by Paul Hawken. The Introduction to Drawdown event was written and scripted by The Pachamama Alliance to offer an inspiring educational experience of hope and action. The script was modified by the presenter, Douglas Bonar, a member of First Unity and EarthCare to highlight not only the wisdom and message of the indigenous elders and climate scientists, but also the wisdom and message of our New Thought (Unity) theology. The event was co-hosted by Cher Tanner, the coordinator of the Tampa Bay Pachamama Alliance. Attendees were offered Time Bank hours through our local St. Petersburg Time Bank. **Purpose:** to explore a personal, community and collective response to global warming.

**Step or action in the EarthCare Program:** hosted a three-hour event which brought together leaders in the community focused on sharing and promoting community-based practical strategies that empower families to respond to global warming.

**Date(s):** January 27, 2020

**Number of participants:** 80 people

**Results:** the participants were introduced to and became aware of the myriad ways a community can make a difference in reducing their carbon footprint and contribute to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions around the world.

**Support material** (newspaper articles, announcements, brochures, pictures, etc.):

**Activity No. 2: First Unity EarthCare Ministry joins St Pete Time Bank**

([www.stpetetimebank.org](http://www.stpetetimebank.org) )

**Description:** In March 2019 First Unity EarthCare Ministry joined St Pete Time Bank ([www.stpetetimebank.org](http://www.stpetetimebank.org) ) as an organizational member as we were aligned so well with this local partner. Since we have so many “givers” who are passionately helping build our spiritual campus and our local communities, EarthCare considered it a perfect fit! St. Pete Time Bank’s vision: *We envision a city where time and resources of all people are equitably valued as a community asset.* Initially we had about 25 interested folks who went through an informational meeting given by the founder of the St Pete Time Bank. It has grown substantially since that first gathering.

The St. Pete Time Bank teaches its members to exchange services & goods without the use of cash to create resilient communities. Time Bank USA was created by Edgar Cahn in 1980 with 1000 worldwide & over half in the USA.

**Purpose:** to build on and expand First Unity EarthCare Ministry's core value "building community" through a partnership with St. Pete Time Bank whose vision is a city where time and resources of all people are equitably valued as a community asset.

**Step or action in the EarthCare Program:** EarthCare hosted an orientation meeting at First Unity after our 2<sup>nd</sup> service on March 10th inviting the whole congregation to "discover" time banking. Since that orientation, we have been able to give our members "Time Bank hours" for attending events, planning events, and other activities to build community.

**Date(s):** March 10, 2019 was the start, and continues into 2020

**Number of participants:** 25, initially

**Results:** In 2019 EarthCare logged in 154 separate exchanges for a total of 453.75 hours. An EarthCare member who moved away is logging all of our hours for us, so even from another state she can earn Time Bank hours!!

More recently, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Time Bankers have been making protective masks for those who need them in our area.

### **Activity No. 3: Showing of the film "The Sequel"**

**Description:** First Unity Earthcare ministry hosted, in our sanctuary, a showing of the feature film "The Sequel." The movie presented communities around the world that are taking actions to lessen the effects of people on the climate, producing food more sustainably, and building communities that are resilient and kind. We followed the film with a panel discussion of some of the topics brought forth in the movie with our panelists including representatives of a local community garden enterprise and our local "Time Bank."

**Purpose:** inspire a vision of a kinder more cooperative society to help build resilient and kind communities

**Step or action in the EarthCare Program:** We showed the feature film The Sequel, and provided a guided discussion with local community leaders on how our congregation could support our ministry's calling to care for our Earth home and share our vision of a more sustainable community.

**Date(s):** May 19, 2020

**Number of participants:** 40 plus

**Results:** We were able to *educate* and provide *actionable* steps through the *sharing* that accompanied the panel discussion. Both the slides ahead of the movie and subsequent guided discussions succeeded in provoking responses from the audience and conversations as to how they could join our ministry's calling to care for our Earth home and to share in our vision of a more sustainable community.

**Support material** (newspaper articles, announcements, brochures, pictures, etc.):

Attached are the materials we used to promote the event and some of the slides we used to promote the discussion.

### **Activity No. 4: Recycling comes to the First Unity Campus in St. Petersburg, FL**

**Description:** In early 2019, the Earth Care Ministry identified recycling as a priority activity that would raise consciousness and awareness of Earth Care among our First Unity Church congregation. After extensive surveys, research, and outreach to local recycling plants and experts, we presented our proposal to the Church Board to purchase recycling bins and develop educational materials. The program was approved it mid-2019. The Earth Care Ministry then purchased 3 large 22- gallon recycling containers and matching bins for regular trash, two for inside the church

and one set for outside events. EarthCare continued to supply trash bins and matching trash receptacles to multiple rooms (22) across campus. Simultaneously, the Ministry launched a widespread ad and educational campaign to raise awareness and understanding on recycling. This included posters, trips to the local recycling plants, announcements at services and in the church newsletter, and focused campaigns such as supporting our local community's "Skip the Straw" initiative with educational materials on statistics regarding single-use plastics. Almost nine months later, the Ministry continues to develop learning opportunities about the benefits and methods to recycling.

**Purpose:** living the Unity principles by laying the groundwork for becoming a GREEN campus through informing, educating, and launching a recycling program for First Unity Church St Pete.

**Step or action in the EarthCare Program:** EarthCare Ministry launched a widespread recycling campaign that included raising funds for purchasing recycling bins, instituting a recycling program on the First Unity St. Pete campus, and developing and implementing an ambitious educational program for the congregation.

**Date(s):** March 2019-present day

**Number of participants:** 6 EarthCare Ministry leaders, First Unity's Board, and broader congregation

**Results:** First Unity St. Pete campus has a robust and permanent recycling campaign and equipment that today recycles all paper, plastic, and aluminum products used by campus leaders and congregants. The recycling educational campaign is now part of the children's program of teaching and is present in all EarthCare ministry events. For example, the children participated in a summer workshop on recycling led by the local waste facility. Local community recycling efforts, such as St. Pete's "Kick the Straw" campaign, and the local recycling plant efforts to dispose properly of paints, chemicals, and other hazardous materials have raised awareness among congregants of the role and importance of recycling to protect Mother Earth.

**Support material** (newspaper articles, announcements, brochures, pictures, etc.):

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**Name of Congregation:**

**Unity Church of Overland Park, KS**

**Address (Street):**

Abdallah Shriners Temple

5300 Metcalf Ave.

**Address (City, State, ZIP Code):**

Overland Park, KS 66202

**Telephone No.:**

913.649.1750

**Website:**

[www.ucop.org](http://www.ucop.org)

**Senior Minister/Spiritual Leader:** David Mosher (interim)

**Activity No. 1:**

**Clean Stream Day**

**Description:**

Remove lean trash & litter along the Johnson County, Kansas's Streamway Trail system.

**Purpose:**

Enhance the natural beauty of Johnson County trails along its numerous streams.

**Date):**

April 6, 2019

Number of participants: Five  
 Results: We picked up approximately 15 bags of litter.

### **Activity No. 2**

Title of Activity: Planting Independence, One Yard at a Time  
 Description: In conjunction with *The Whole Person*, Clean up the yard of a person with disabilities who is unable to do so themselves.  
 Purpose: Remove debris and clean up the yards of people with disabilities who are Clients of "The Whole Person."  
 Date(s): April 3, 2019  
 Number of participants: Two  
 Results: In conjunction with two other volunteer groups, we removed an extensive amount of dead wood from the home of a single parent with disabilities.

### **Activity No. 3**

Title of Activity: **Petition to Johnson Board of County Commissioners**  
 Description: Spearheaded the creation and presentation of a petition to the Johnson County Board of Commissioners urging them to restate their commitment to a resolution of goals in December of 2007 for reduction in GHG by specific dates. In addition, for the Commissioners to create a special Sustainability Committee that includes community members to guide, monitor and advocate for the completion of these goals. The petition included 192 signatures representing four organizations. The petition was presented at the Commissioners July 10, 2019 meeting. In November of 2019, Unity Church of Overland Park was approved as an official "Partner" with the KC Climate Action Coalition, the only individual religious denomination in the KC Metro area to be so honored.  
 Purpose: To support the KC Climate Action Coalition, whose purpose is to create a model for communities throughout the United States to follow in order to reduce global greenhouse emissions (GGE).  
 Date(s): July 10, 2019, November 2019  
 Number of participants: 192  
 Results: As a result of UCOP Green Team's initiative, Johnson County has reaffirmed their pledge to reduce GGE and assumed a leadership role to create a bi-partisan coalition to achieve a similar goal throughout the five county KC metropolitan area.

**Activity No. 4:**

Description:

Turning of the Seasons/Blessing of the Waters.

Two ceremonies to bless our holy waters and honor the turning of summer to fall

Purpose:

Respect the interdependent web of creation.

Results:

Although we put a tremendous amount of work into this project, including hiring a vibrational healing band, unfortunately the formal ceremony was rained out. However, 10 of us proceeded with a community picnic and spiritual connection.

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**Name:****Unity of Charleston**

Address:

2535 Leeds Ave.

Address:

Charleston, SC 29405

Website:

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unitycharleston@msn.com

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Senior Minister:

Rev. Ed Kosak

[minister@unitychs.org](mailto:minister@unitychs.org)

President/Governing Body:

Jeannine Clemens

Email:

[Jeannine@bridgetoavalon.com](mailto:Jeannine@bridgetoavalon.com)

Contact Person:

Elizabeth Cain

Address:

Same as above.

Contact Person Phone No.

843.566.0600

Contact Person Email Address:

lizcain80@gmail.com

**Activity No. 1:**

Description:

**Recycling**

We have an extensive recycling system that includes unusual items that require taking to special places (i.e., plastic film, toner cartridges & batteries).

**Activity No. 2:**

Description:

**Reduce Waste**

We hold no-trash events, use permanent name tags on Sunday, have a “share table” to promote reuse of items, thereby reducing landfill waste, composting, reusable dishes/napkins & cloths, policy to purchase compostable products,

**Activity No. 3**

Description:

**Education**

Monthly speakers, including the Sustainability Manager with MUSC University Hospital, the Recycling Rep. from the County, speaker from the Citizens Climate Lobby, a podcast

interviewer of Climate World Changers, an herbalist and nutrition counselor.

**Activity No. 4:**

Description:

**Mindful Eating Program**

Compost leftovers. Prepare food for the hungry & homeless at potluck in the park, brought in speakers to discuss the relationship between the body, mind spirit and food.

**Activity No. 5**

Description:

**Eco-Newsletter**

A monthly newsletter to nearly 600 subscribers.