



## Getting Into Action Through EarthCare: Starting a Green Team and Keeping It Going

Consider the following steps to become an EarthCare Congregation:

- Contact the Unity EarthCare Team at [receptionist@unity.org](mailto:receptionist@unity.org) to indicate your interest, and to seek support and guidance. Put “EarthCare” in the Subject.
- Gather a small group of people (two to eight) to serve as a Green Team.
- Become familiar with the EarthCare Program.
- Inform/involve the ministerial leadership/staff of your interest and commitment. (It’s important that the Green Team be spiritually-based and has the support of the leadership of the church. Without this, the long-term success of the Green Team is problematic. Meet personally with your senior minister early on the planning process to solicit his or her ideas regarding the Green Team).
- Approach the church governing board for authorization to proceed.
- Develop an **Action Plan** for the congregation in several areas. An action plan should outline the following:
  - Adopt a vision statement and a mission statement.
  - Establish an organizational structure.
  - Set objectives.
  - Set goals.
  - Develop strategies. One way of doing this is to adopt specific “Areas of Interest” with an accompanying action plan to achieve results in each area within a specified time frame. Areas of interest may include:
    - **Worship.** Have the Board adopt a declaration of EarthCare that sets out the church’s commitment to be good stewards of the environment. Its adoption should be recognized and celebrated by the entire congregation.
    - **Education/Communication.** This is key to teaching the importance of stewardship of the environment. Whether within the congregational committee or in the wider community, share information, recruit participation, and gather resources to carry out actions.
    - **Buildings and Grounds.**
    - **Sustainable Living.** E.g., recycling, energy conservation, reduce/reuse.
    - **Natural Resources.** One of the greatest satisfactions of life is to explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth. In so doing we practice and promote the responsible use of the earth’s ecosystems and resources.
- Work with the appropriate committees and individuals to carry out the Action Plan.

- Promote among the spiritual community's members your identity as a congregation that cares for creation.
- Meet regularly (at least monthly) to follow the Action Plan and to develop new projects. Pick the "low-lying fruit" first. By making your activities part of events planned by other environmental organizations, it is much easier to achieve some quick successes that stimulate interest and enthusiasm for the concept of EarthCare.
- Diversify the committee's leadership as much as possible. While every Green Team needs at least one "champion" (i.e., someone who's dedicated to its success and will do whatever's necessary when no one else steps forward), more than one person must be committed. The long-term success of the environmental committee can't be expected to ride upon one person's shoulders.
- As the success of the committee grows, be bold by branching out to take on congregational projects that benefit the larger community.
- Continue to develop new activities that are equally balanced between nurturing a spiritual commitment to the earth and achieving practical "on the ground" results.
- Apply to be certified as an EarthCare Congregation and request that the church's governing board adopt the Green Congregation Mission Statement.

At the EarthCare webpage, [www.unity.org/earthcare](http://www.unity.org/earthcare), you will find many resources and suggestions for taking each of the steps listed above. You can begin anywhere. Gravitate to what motivates you. However, we encourage you and members of your Green Team to read the [EarthCare Program](#) through one time and to do so every year or so in your work. Also, make it available to your congregation and to new Green Team members.

A commitment to protecting and preserving the environment sends a powerful signal to the congregation regarding the church's commitment to environmental stewardship. Members will be proud to belong to a congregation that cares about our earth and has a commitment to protecting the environment. It may even spur them to do more in their own lives. Through leading by example, you have the opportunity to show others ways to live their lives in more spiritual harmony with the earth.