



Suggestions/Opportunities

The following are additional EarthCare activities, categorized according to the appropriate step of the Path to EarthCare, as described in more detail in the EarthCare Program. Be sure to check all the resources we have available to you on our EarthCare webpage www.unityworldwideministries.org/earthcare, which includes:

- History of Unity EarthCare
- Vision: Covenants, Vision Statements, Mission Statements and Action Plans
- How to Start a Green Team and Keep it Going
- Why Get Involved in EarthCare?
- Awakening the Dreamer through Unity: What you need to know
- Awakening the Dreamer through Unity: User Manual
- Awakening the Dreamer through Unity: Video
- Green Star Award for Congregations
- Internal Environmental/Energy Analysis

Finally, UET sponsors monthly mentoring calls. The dial-in number is 1-641-715-3680, passcode 1043504#. For more information, contact David Cordova at davecordova@msn.com, 210.825.8422.

PRAY

- Hold special services for Earth Day
- Include earth prayers in Sunday services, meditations, newsletters
- Dedicate Sunday services to the vision of EarthCare that 'All humanity lives in a spiritual consciousness that manifests as loving co-existence with all creation and care for our Earth home'.
- Build a Labyrinth for reflecting on our connection with all creation.
- Mention care for the earth, air, water, and all living things in the weekly meditation.
- Develop a church meditation garden.
- Include an Earth Prayer in monthly or quarterly newsletters.
- Have "Animal Blessing Sunday." Pets are brought to church to be blessed. A popular time to hold this is near the Feast of St. Francis (Oct. 3).
- Create a consciousness for the work through prayer by affirming and promoting the interdependent web of existence and by acknowledging our deep connections with the natural world and with our living planet.

- Dedicate Sunday services, more than once a year, to the vision of EarthCare that, *All humanity lives in a spiritual consciousness that manifests as loving co-existence with all creation and care for our Earth home.*
- Periodically include reference to our commitment to the reverence for life and respect for the interdependent web of all existence in the weekly meditation.
- Periodically have special ceremonies that honor our connectedness with the natural world, such as:
 - ▶ Celebrate the turning of the seasons. A sacred table can be adorned to reflect the season and its spiritual gift.
 - ▶ “Blessing of the Waters” ceremony.
 - ▶ Outdoor services.
 - ▶ Labyrinth walks.
 - ▶ Tree blessings.
 - ▶ Medicine wheel ceremonies.
 - ▶ "Animal Blessing Sunday". Pets are brought to church to be blessed.
- Conduct Advent through Epiphany services that honor the mineral, plant, animal, and human kingdoms.
- Dedicate the month of April to the elements.
- Fly prayer flags from the church building.
- Develop a seven-week series on an inspirational book on caring for the earth.
- Hold a ceremony on a new church property for “coming to the land.”
- Visit a sacred site near your church.
- Develop a church meditation garden.
- Include an earth prayer in monthly or quarterly newsletters.

VISION

Once a ministry discerns, through prayer, a call to adopt EarthCare, it should create a vision for the work with the ministry leadership. This may take the form of a covenant, a vision statement, or a mission statement to care for creation. Each document further refines the purpose, objectives and goals of the Earthcare program.

- ◆ 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 a one-sentence affirmation that concentrates on the future. It 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**.

INSPIRE

- Include an earth focus in their activities, such as:
 - ▶ Sunday services,
 - ▶ Prayers,
 - ▶ Songs, and
 - ▶ Special ceremonies.
- Post your EarthCare covenant in a prominent place in the church.
- Periodically give awards and recognition to congregants who have demonstrated outstanding care and concern for the environment (i.e., “Green Star” award.)
- If your ministry becomes certified as a Unity EarthCare Congregation, commemorate it with a sign and post it in front of the church.
- Hold Earth Day Sunday service. Annual worship packets on different themes are available for free download from the National Council of Churches’ Eco-justice program: www.nccecojustice.org.
- Have congregants share their personal achievements in caring for the earth during Sunday services.
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- Use special 'earth music' during services
- Celebrate the turning of the seasons. A sacred table can be adorned to reflect the season and its spiritual gift.
- Conduct Advent through Epiphany services that honor the mineral, plant, animal, and human kingdoms.
- Dedicate the month of April to the four elements.
- Sponsor the symposium, *Awakening the Dreamer, Changing the Dream* (by the Pachamama Alliance). It will both educate and inspire attendees.
- Encourage the Men’s and Women's groups to create earth-oriented altars for display.
- Visit a sacred site near your church.
- Create a banner for EarthCare, World Water Day, etc. Invite congregants to sign it, and display it during special services.
- Put the words of your EarthCare covenant on a refrigerator magnet and distribute to congregants.
- Make it a policy to purchase environmentally friendly products (custodial/maintenance, social, business operations, use recyclable/biodegradable cups and dinnerware.
- Promote sustainable values. (i.e., serve foods low on the food, locally grown or organic at church functions).
- Periodically give awards and recognition to congregants who have demonstrated outstanding care and concern for the environment. (i.e., “Green Star” award.)
- Encourage the Men and Women's Group may create earth oriented alters for display.

- During Sunday worship services, show pictures of the universe and Unity landscaping as overhead backdrops to inspire and appreciate the beauty and complexity of nature.

EDUCATE

- Sponsor a green- eco fair.
- Find ways to enhance your ministries environmental/sustainable consciousness
- Prepare brochures or handouts that enhance environmental education such as fair trade coffee, comprehensive recycling guides, composting, etc.
- Create a permanent information display with educational, topical and timely environmental literature.
- Regularly publish a regular green team article in the church newsletter and/or on the church website.
- Invite speakers regarding various environmental topics such as: alternate transportation, purchasing hybrid vehicles, conducting home energy audits, building rain gardens or rain barrels, how/where to recycle, healthy eating, what you can do to lessen your carbon footprint, climate change, composting, and landscaping with native plants.
- Have a green film series and provide popcorn and discussion afterwards.
- Develop a seven-week series on a book on caring for the earth.
- Host a meal to discuss green topics.
- Sponsor an alternative energy fair with information on public utilities, green buildings & energy efficiencies.
- “Have a Sustainable Christmas”” Display and demonstrate creative ways to reduce, reuse, and recycle products during the holidays.
- Between services, show “Green Videos” on different topics such as green gardening, shopping, cleaning, etc.
- Have an “eating your values” lunch program at which the benefits of buying locally grown and organic are discussed.
- Periodically show videos with a focus upon universal brotherhood, social justice, and what we can do as a human species to preserve the Earth,
- Learn about energy rebate opportunities in your state.
- Learn about local or regional issues.
- Educate the Congregation on the topic of healthy eating and sustainability.
 - Encourage congregants to submit “Green Recipes”, then publish them in a “Green” cook book.
 - Sell fair trade coffee or chocolate. Good fundraiser.
 - Post a “Buy Local” map in the church lobby.
 - Promote sustainable foods (e.g., locally grown, organic, less packaging) at church functions. For example:
 - ▶ Host a “100 mile” potluck picnic to encourage buying food locally.
 - ▶ Host an “eating your values” lunch program at which the benefits of buying locally grown and organic are discussed.

- Have social gatherings at area farmer's markets or at places that serve only locally grown food.
- Encourage food cooperatives to buy locally or organically grown food products.

Youth and Family Ministries.

Connect with Youth & Family Ministry whenever possible. Develop and implement a Youth Ministry curriculum that promotes environmental stewardship/Earth Care. Some possibilities include:

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- For Earth Day:
 - ▶ Have each class develop a display that honors the mineral, plant, animal and human kingdoms, and discuss one kingdom each week in April.
 - ▶ Give packages of flower seeds to YFM. Present in a large (green ribbon) package for added effect.
- Honor animals by making posters with pictures of animals and that highlight animal care organizations. Put on a display board.
- Sponsor "Bubbles and Blessings" Saturday, in which pets are brought to church where they are washed & blessed in the parking lot (use biodegradable soap).
- Give packages of flower seeds to the youth. Present in a large (green ribbon) package for added effect.
- Include gardening in youth programs (plant native plants, wildflowers, water resistant). Hold periodic educational lectures and gatherings to YOU and others at the garden.
- Develop a "family hikes" program to visit natural places.
- Invite a guest speaker for a class or Sunday service on EarthCare topics.
- Show videos regarding environmental issues.
- Have children make conservation posters illustrating how conservation is important to them.
- Have YFM planting parties to celebrate Easter and the Spring Equinox;
- Conduct youth Education Sunday School classes, including purchasing and installing a Peace Pole and offered prayers and blessings before planting spring flowers at the base of the Pole;

Promote a Healthful Human Environment

Environmental sustainability, spiritual fulfillment, and social action are all connected and whatever is done in one area affects the other two. Emphasize this point in your events.

- Advocate for a healthful human environment. Keep members on the green team mailing list aware of current issues regarding the environment.
- Get the church to adopt the policy to purchase environmentally friendly products (custodial/maintenance, business operations, kitchen).
- Be aware of chemical sensitivity: minimize use of pesticides and herbicides, use hypoallergenic alternatives and carpeting.

- Raise awareness of issues, such as climate change, by participating in national and international campaigns.
- Create a community Garden.
- Start a “*Congregational Wellness Project.*” Conduct a physical activity assessment using the Congregational Health Index or “CHI.” Examples of visions of health to life include:
 - Committing to serve only healthy (low or no-sugar) beverages, especially plain water;
 - Cutting donuts in half and serving them to people, instead of leaving them unattended;
 - Gathering and posting nutritional information about foods served on-site, like showing how much fat and sugar is in pastries by putting the amount of Crisco and sugar in buckets for all to see;
 - Promoting healthy food and beverage choices and active living through signage, newsletter articles, literature and displays, pulpit announcements and sermons, and health fairs;
 - Offering healthy cooking classes (including modifying traditional foods from various cultures) and lessons on canning fruits and vegetables;
 - Helping congregants develop small gardens at their homes or other members’ homes;

ACTION

Energy Conservation

- **Environmental/Energy Assessment:** everything you wanted to know and more!
 - Go to unity.org/earthcare and click on Link 'Green Facility Assessment'
 - Many utility companies offer free energy audits
 - Church Mutual Insurance Company provides a comprehensive “Self-Inspection Safety Checklist.”
- Make energy conservation a part of the church’s long term plan as major building, structural and mechanical components are replaced.
- Turn down the water heater, install a timer for the hot water heater.
- Make thermostat adjustments.
- Use energy efficient light bulbs.
- Participate in U.S. EPA’s *Change a Light, Change the World* campaign.
- Replace energy efficient appliances and business equipment with ones that have the “Energy Star” U.S. EPA label for using less energy.
- Add automatic timers to restroom lights.
- Install an energy efficient HVAC in your church.
- Install a central management system to control electrical usage.
- Install a reflective or “green” roof on the church building.

- Stagger the times when lights are turned on, especially on Sundays. Doing so can significantly reduce the church's electric bill because of the way load usage is calculated. Contact your local electrical supplier for more information.
- Sponsor "Tire Check Sunday", where cars are checked to see if they have the proper tire pressure.
- Encourage congregants to walk, ride bikes or car pool every third Sunday.
- Learn about energy rebate opportunities in your state.
- Install automatic power-down on computers
- Install an energy efficient HVAC in your church.
- Install a central management system to control electrical usage.
- Set up a car pool board for ride exchanges
- Sponsor an eco-fair.
- Use your own 'to go' bottle for cold liquids and a mug for hot liquids
- Use mulching, rain gardens, rain barrels
- Use your own bags or paper bags
- Install energy efficient ballasts and use LED or CF lighting
- Install Motion sensors
- Install Low water usage toilets
- Use a programmable, efficient thermostat

Recycling

- Become a metal recycler and take iron, aluminum, brass, etc. to your local metal recycler.
- Recycle paper, cardboard, plastic, glass, cans, bottles, newspapers, magazines-magazines, ink cartridges, cell phones and junk mail. Make sure the church has recycling bins.
- Sponsor events surrounding *America Recycles Day*, such as:
 - ▶ Participate in programs like "Souls4Soles," in which used shoes are collected and are either sent to third world countries for reuse or recycled as part of material to resurface asphalt parking lots.
 - ▶ Collect used magnetic VHS tapes, DVDs, and CDs.
 - ▶ Give an award to members of the congregation, or groups, who have done or are doing good things for the environment.
 - ▶ Sponsor a *Green Ribbon Certificate* campaign, whereby people pledge to reduce, reuse or conserve material for the next 12 months.
- Participate in community-wide paper recycling contests
- Purchase recyclable bins for sale to congregants who live in areas that don't have curbside recycling.
- Collect aluminum cans for resale & plastic bottles for recycling in a community room or on church grounds.
- Contact Big Sisters/Big Brothers and ask them if they will place a collection bin on church grounds for clothing and household items.

- Hold a yearly rummage sale or collection day.
- Volunteer periodically to work at community recycling centers.
- Volunteer to work on Electronics recycling days held in the community.
- Have a “Green Christmas:” Buy a live Christmas tree and plant it; recycle a cut tree, or use an artificial tree; recycle wrapping paper; give a class instead of “stuff,” etc.
- Make the church a community recycling center.

Waste Minimization

- Conduct a “waste audit” of the church. Check wastebaskets, staff and kitchen areas for throwaway items that could be recycled or replaced with renewable alternatives.
- Make it church policy to go paperless in church correspondence, wherever possible.
- Use recycled paper in church bulletins.
- Sponsor events such as *Have a Sustainable Christmas* and a *Christmas Card Swap Shop*.
- Sell reusable shopping bags. Could put the church logo on the bags.
- Use yard waste or recycled materials (such as burlap) for mulch and erosion control.
- Challenge members of the congregation not to purchase any new, non-consumable goods for 120 days.
- Replace Styrofoam cups with ceramic ones.
- Replace paper toweling with cloth towels
- Invest in cloth napkins to replace paper disposable ones.
- Hold workshops on how to make rain barrels or rain gardens.
- Challenge congregation members not purchase any new, non-consumable goods for 45 days.
- Hold a yearly rummage sale or collection day.
- Subsidize reusable plastic and stainless steel water bottles with a Unity logo to promote their use in place of disposable water bottles.
- Compost food items (usually no meat, dairy), dryer lint
- Use washable dinnerware.
- Take your own 'to go' container for leftovers

Water Conservation and Landscaping

- Replace old toilets with “low flow” toilets.
- Hold workshops on how to make rain barrels or rain gardens.
- If you have extra acreage, leave it natural & certify it as a “backyard wildlife habitat” with the National Wildlife Federation.
- Install Energy Star appliances that use water.

- Install low flow water faucets

Conservancy of Natural Resources

- Become involved and participate in activities sponsored by local environmental organizations. This is an easy way to start a new green team with minimal effort.
- Sponsor Earth Day/National Arbor Day activities, such as:
 - ▶ Plant a tree on church grounds accompanied by a special ceremony.
 - ▶ Give away tree saplings or bushes to youth and/or the congregation.
 - ▶ Have your minister deliver an earth-oriented sermon,
 - ▶ Participate in activities with other environmental organizations,
 - ▶ Through Youth and Family Ministries (YFM) have children make conservation posters illustrating how conservation was important to them.
- Participate in local natural resource campaigns such as stream cleanup days, removal of non-indigenous plants, and planting of wildflowers.
- Tour local environmental discovery centers, sponsor hikes or visits to local natural areas, tour a solar or “Zero Energy” home.
- Celebrate the summer by buying local flowers. Why buy flowers from 1,500 miles or more away (and a big carbon footprint) when you can get beautiful flowers from close by and support your local farmer?
- Encourage a “sense of place” by sharing information about local and regional
- Have a “Green Christmas”—buy a live Christmas tree and plant it, recycle a cut tree, or use an artificial tree; recycle wrapping paper; give a class instead of “stuff,” etc
- Organizing social time and fundraisers that are also active time, like family bike rides or dances or jog-a-thons; and Installing a bike rack.
- Adopt A Highway.
- Join in community projects.

Promote Awareness of the Interdependent Web of Creation

- Realize that environmental sustainability, spiritual fulfillment and social action are all part of the same issue and that whatever is done in one area affects the other two. Emphasize this point in your events.
- Put the words of the EarthCare covenant on a refrigerator magnet and distribute to congregants.
- Raise awareness of climate change by participating in local, national and international campaigns.
- Each Sunday for a month have congregant bring a stuffed animal to church and leave it in the pew. On the final Sunday, all the stuffed animals are put in the pews, blessed and then donated to police or shelter organizations, who give them to abused children.
- Observe the Season of Peace and Nonviolence and the 11 Days of Global Unity.

- Develop a peace pole to foster worldwide peace consciousness Go to www.onepeacemanypaths.org.

Ecological Social Justice

- Encourage messages from the pulpit that recognize humanity’s moral imperative to respect and care for the environment and all sentient beings.
- Develop actions in accordance with Unity’s positive spiritual principles, both within and outside the congregation that:
- Provide educational programs regarding how to be effective “activated citizens” regarding ecological socially justice issues. This may be done directly or in conjunction with other organizations . Examples include the League of Women Voters, the Pachamama Alliance, Interfaith Power and Light, the Climate Action Network, the Rainforest Action Network and the Humane Society.
- Invite guest lecturers to speak regarding local, regional and national ecological justice issues.
- Show films featuring different forms of environmental oppression and Discrimination, as well as the inhumane treatment of animals, and what they can do about it.
- Write letters and self-create petitions urging local, county, state or federal legislators to oppose issues that inequitably affect minority or low-income communities, or result in the inhumane treatment of animals.
- Collaborate with and support other environmental organizations, locally and nationally, that share the Vision and Mission of the Green Team.
- Encourage congregants to speak out in public forums on behalf of politically disadvantaged communities on issues where they will be forced to bear an unequal burden of harmful ecological consequence.

Mindful Eating

- Sponsor a food appreciation from farmer to table pairing small scale and immigrant farmers to congregations to provide producers and consumers an opportunity to understand one another. Include farmer tables as well as community-supported agriculture (CSA) for congregations. Small immigrant farmers who face language and cultural barriers find the supportive atmosphere of the congregations very encouraging. In addition, congregation members learn about different cultures. Farm families producing on a scale too small for other marketing opportunities get a new opportunity through the partnerships.
- Fight hunger. For more information, see “Food Sovereignty for All: Overhauling the Food System with Faith-Based Initiatives” handbook.
- Save \$ on Food and Support Local Producers-Buying Clubs.
- Sell fair trade coffee or chocolate.

- Put a “Buy Local” map in the lobby.
- Have a 100 mile potluck picnic to encourage buying food locally
- Have periodic social gatherings at various farmer's markets in the area or at places that serves only locally grown food.
- Develop a community garden and/or native plantings area. Host educational lectures and gatherings at the garden. Garden products can be donated to the local food bank, or sold.

SHARE

Sharing our ideas and successes, through word-of-mouth, presentations, and news media, is important for fostering the work within our congregations and the larger community. Networking with other groups and programs reminds us that we are not alone in the task of caring for creation.

- Co-sponsor events in your community
- Integrate with other ministry teams in the church in order to generate more interest, participation, and harmony. Invite their representatives to Green Team meetings to give a presentation of what they do. In return, send a representative of the Green team to one of their meetings to explain the purpose of the Green Team.
- Participate in local “green” or earth fairs.
- Participate in events sponsored by local environmental organizations or coalitions.
- Host an event, such as an alternative energy fair, and open it to the community.
- If your ministry creates a banner for EarthCare, circulate it among other churches and organizations in your community.
- Environmental Display rack. Establish a permanent environmental information display rack containing educational, topical and timely environmental literature.
- Newsletter/Website. Regularly publish a regular green team article in the church newsletter and/or on the church website.
- Integrate with other groups in the church in order to generate more interest, participation, and harmony. Invite representatives from the Women's Group, the Men's Group, the Facilities Team, etc. to Green Team meetings to give a presentation of what they do. In return, send a representative of the Green team to one of their meetings to explain the purpose of the Green Tea.

REAFFIRM

Every work has its seasons. There are ebbs and flows in EarthCare work. However, even during a “winter” season of low energy for projects, prayer and visioning anew, perhaps annually, allows the ministry to re-assess where to focus its efforts.

- Have an annual “review and renew” meeting of the Green Team, to assess where the program has been and where it may lead in the future.
- Sponsor a “listening table” to solicit feedback from the congregation regarding the EarthCare’s vision, mission and activities.
- Be inventive in creating ways to celebrate and re-affirm your commitment and passion to the EarthCare Program.
- Design new rituals/ceremonies.