



EarthCare Connections

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Worldwide Ministries
EarthCare

Fostering awareness of our spiritual oneness with the earth and promoting active care of creation.

Unity of Traverse City, Michigan, Completes the Path to EarthCare

Unity of Traverse City, Michigan, Senior Minister Eileen Stulak, has completed all seven steps on the path to EarthCare. By so doing, they became the fifteenth Unity congregation to be **certified at level C** of the EarthCare Program. They also are the thirteenth member of the **Unity Great Lakes Region** that is a certified congregation. This region leads the nation. Unity of Traverse City completed the process in 21 months, which also demonstrates their strong commitment to the environment.

A few of the congregation's many activities include completing five of six recommendations of an energy audit, replacing lighting with LED, two environmental cleanup projects, and five activities in the area of social justice. Congratulations, Unity of Traverse City!

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Undiscovered Holy Land

I [Ron Habin] recently had the honor of representing the Unity EarthCare Team (UET) addressing 40 ministers and LUTs at the 2018 Southeast Unity meeting. Several attendees approached me after the talk and told me that the efforts of (UET) were really germane to their own work at church and in their careers.

Among the assembled, two participants happened to be environmental engineers. I noticed in the meeting program that there was a field trip that afternoon to something called the "Greenwood Wetlands." I was quite surprised about this as, while I've lived in host city Orlando, Florida, for 27 years, I'd never heard of it. There is a famous old cemetery in town called "Greenwood" but in my experience, it had not been referred to as wetlands.

I climbed into one of the caravan vehicles and we travelled east through the city to what was for me, an unfamiliar area. To my amazement, right in downtown, there was a respite area of lush wetlands. The engineers asked us to gather around the hood of a car as they unrolled old blueprints and a 3-D mock-up plan. They provided detailed explanation of the design ideas for future wetlands.



There were to be a series of four holding ponds for ground water. Sure enough, the first holding area contained soupy green water. Through a series of graduated steps, the water would meander downhill. To the eye, it became a cleaner version of itself at each holding area. At the fourth area, the water was so clean, it was nearly potable. It was a perfect final product to safely water the famous Greenwood Cemetery. No additional watering would be required.

There was further environmental improvement. Thirty years earlier, a young environmental engineer named Carla Palmer planted hundreds of cypress saplings around the burgeoning waterway. As we arrived at the entrance to the wetlands, Ms. Palmer suddenly drew up short. She stopped, sighed, gently teared up and emoted, “I never thought I’d see this in my lifetime.” Her “baby” saplings had all grown up. Now, the adult trees could provide cooling shade and beauty to downtown explorers of this mid-Florida city. I had been led to what was for me, a holy treasure.

Today, in addition to her environmental engineering career, Carla Palmer is a licensed Unity teacher at [Unity of Fort Myers Spiritual Center](#). Her church is already EarthCare certified. Carla is presently nurturing human “saplings” leading her congregation’s green team to an even higher level of spiritual consciousness.

Ron Habin
UET-Chair

Unity of Kalamazoo Styrofoam™ Recycling Project

Styrofoam is widely used all over the world for various purposes, including packing, coffee cups, plates, food trays, fabrication of car parts etc. While Styrofoam™ has many benefits, it is made from petroleum and a carcinogenic chemical known as benzene that is used in the production process. Moreover, Styrofoam™ is hardly biodegradable. In the absence of a suitable solvent, Styrofoam™ can last almost forever. When ingested by animals, it often blocks their digestive tracts, causes starvation, and ultimately death. These are among the reasons why over 20 cities in the United States have banned the use of Styrofoam™.

The only way Styrofoam™ can be recycled is through a commercial chemical process that involves feeding the collected EPS foam through conveyor belts into a shredding machine. The shredded EPS foam is then transferred to a plastic extruder where the foam is exposed to heat and pressure to melt the EPS foam. Subsequently, the melted EPS foam passes out through a small outlet at the end of the extruder and solidifies into a continuous form. This form of EPS can then be easily transported to the required factories for remolding (again using heat and pressure) into its new EPS products. (www.all-recycling-facts.com/recycling-styrofoam.html#ixzz5eVtZgndM).

Unity of Kalamazoo, Michigan, recently collected Styrofoam™ and transported it to a recycling center in Cooper Township, Michigan. When this building is full, DART Container Corporation will return it to the recycling plant in Mason, Michigan, to repurpose it into different products, such as picture frames, rulers, pencil boxes, crown molding—and even park benches!

Unity of Kalamazoo hopes to loop other churches in their community that have green teams for the next one to be held in March.

Pictured: Unity of Kalamazoo EarthCare members (from left) Tom Coughlin, Nancy Appel, and (on right) Betsy Valentine working with (center) Jeff Sorensen, Cooper Township Supervisor, and (second from right) a Cooper Twp resident.



Mindful Eating News

Author and dietician Rev. Grace Nikodemus's concept of mindful eating is growing throughout Unity! [Unity Christ Center of Eau Claire, Wisconsin](#), Senior Minister Alden Studebaker has started Mindful Eating classes, and several other congregations are also considering doing so.

On February 20 (final details pending), Rev. Grace will be on [Unity Online Radio](#). Rev. Diana Kennedy from [Unity Worldwide Ministries](#) will be a special guest to talk about how she used Mindful Eating this last year to release 46 pounds. Other topics that will be discussed include: why a drink of warm water and the juice of half a lemon first thing in the morning is good for you, six (6) foods that should not be stored in the refrigerator, and how to start a group or assist the individual.

By fostering awareness of our spiritual oneness with the Earth and promoting active care of creation, Mindful Eating helps restore our sacred relationships with the earth, animals, and our own bodies. Seeing our food choices as a spiritual practice promotes care for both the earth and us.

What a great opportunity to start the new year the right way!

2019 Green Star Award

[Applications for the 2019 Green Star Award](#) will be accepted until **April 1, 2019**.

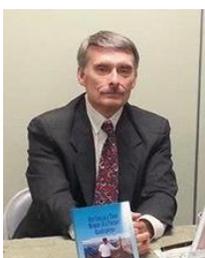
Recipients must have completed at least three activities in calendar year 2018 that are within the seven-step Path to Earthcare. Applications for the Green Star Award, along with the [EarthCare Program](#), can be found at www.unityworldwideministries.org/earthcare.

Submit applications to Mike McCord at 1209 N Leevue Drive, Olathe, KS 66061, or electronically to michael_mccord@sbcglobal.net. For questions, call 913-907-4061.

Mentoring Calls

National: Facilitated by David Cordova on the second Saturday of each month, at 11 a.m. (CT). For more information, please contact David at davecordova@msn.com, or by calling 210-825-8422.

Mindful Eating: Facilitated by Rev. Grace on the third Wednesday of each month at 4 p.m. (CT). The call-in number is 641-715-3680, and the access code is 1043504#.



Mike McCord, Editor