



EarthCare Connections



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Worldwide Ministries
EarthCare

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

EarthCare News

Kathy Harwood Long, “New” EarthCare Core Team Member

The Core Team is extremely pleased to welcome Rev. Kathy Harwood Long back to the EarthCare Team! Kathy is one of the original authors of the “Path to EarthCare,” which was created in Unity’s Northwest Region and is the basis of the EarthCare Program. Kathy played a fundamental role in helping to make the vision of EarthCare an important principle of Unity. Kathy has served as a Unity minister since 1988 and currently lives in Michigan where she is serving at Friends of Unity in Plymouth. Her emphasis is: “Consciousness first, followed by loving action.”



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Unity of the Palm Beaches Certified at Level A of EarthCare Program

[Unity of the Palm Beaches](#), West Palm Beach, Florida, has adopted an EarthCare Covenant and been certified at Level A of the [EarthCare Program](#). Congratulations to Rev. Bob Fortner, Peter Billingham, chair of the governing body, and EarthCare contacts Bill and Jill Ward for their commitment to the environment by embarking on the Path to EarthCare.

Rally for the Climate March

The [Unity Church of Overland Park](#), Kansas, Green Team joined about 150 people in a nationwide *Rise for the Climate* march in Overland Park on Saturday, September 8, 2018. The purpose of the march was to call for a swift transition to renewable energy in order to stave off the various perils of climate change. Pictured below are Green Team members Allison Elliot, Judy Kirkpatrick, and Heidi Brown Jackson.





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Climate Change/Climate Action

By Mike McCord, EarthCare Ministry Team

To coin a phrase, the “inconvenient truth” of climate change is here and it is affecting all of us. Not only is the Earth experiencing record-breaking heat,* but natural disasters such as last year’s Hurricane Harvey was the third 500-year flood in the Houston area in three years. This summer, there were out-of-season 500-year floods in Arizona, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. In addition, seven million acres of land have burned in wildfires so far in 2018. Climate related disasters cost \$306 billion in 2017. Finally, in one of the ultimate ironies, congregants from Christ Church Unity Orlando, Florida’s plans for a beach cleanup this month had to be cancelled because of a health warning that the beach was too dangerous because pollution-created Red Tide had spread from the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic Ocean.

In light of this crisis, what can a religious organization do, as a nonprofit corporation, to take positions that promote faith-based environmentally sensible policies? Actually, a lot more than you may think!

While Section 503(c)(3) regulations prevent charities and religious organizations from participating in political campaign activities that participate or intervene in any candidate for public office, **they can engage in the following activities** without violating the IRS rule:

- Non-partisan activities such as non-partisan voter registration drives, non-partisan candidate debates, and non-partisan voter education.
- Legislative or issue advocacy (i.e. lobbying) as long as it steers clear of political campaigning. For IRS purposes, advocacy/lobbying is an attempt to persuade members of a legislative body to “propose, support, oppose, amend, or repeal legislation.” A nonprofit organization cannot devote a “substantial part” of its overall activities to this activity. While the “substantial part” test has never been clearly defined, most nonprofits use a court ruling that a nonprofit’s lobbying is not substantial as long as **less than five percent** of the organization’s total time and effort for the year. “Legislation” includes among a law, resolution, proposal, nomination, treaty, zoning rule, referendums, initiatives, and constitutional amendments that must be placed on the ballot and voted on by the general public. Lobbying, then, means trying to persuade a

member of Congress, state legislator, city council member, county board of supervisors, and even a member of a foreign legislature or parliament, to vote in a certain way.

- In addition, individuals associated with a 501(c)(3) organization are entitled to voice their opinions and participate in a political campaign, as long as they are not speaking for the organization.

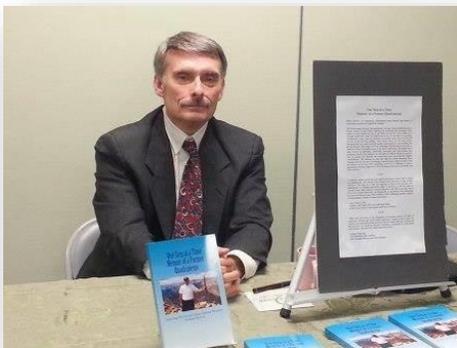
Obviously, each congregation must discern for itself whether they want to participate in environmental advocacy issues, but it is good to know that many things are allowed as long as you don't endorse or participate in campaigns for individual candidates and is in keeping with Unity's principle of positive, pro-activism. A good way to start would be to create a policy that outlines the parameters of such activities. For more information about "EarthCare Plans," contact Mike McCord at michael_mccord@sbcglobal.net. Naturally, any questions regarding the eligibility of an activity should be referred to the congregation's attorney or CPA.

*The ten warmest September global land and ocean surface temperatures have occurred since 2003. (NOAA/NCEI global analysis, accessed October 20, 2018)

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#.



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