

EarthCare Connections



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

EarthCare News



Nancy Appel

The Core Team is pleased to welcome **Nancy Appel**, from Unity of Kalamazoo, Michigan, as its newest member. Nancy is a certified nutritionist who has had a passionate love for caring and protecting the environment all her life. Nancy has been a part of the Unity Movement since 1987 and has been leading the EarthCare Team at Unity of Kalamazoo since 2015, helping them and the congregation reach Level C-EarthCare Congregation this past spring.

Nancy recently served as an Executive Committee member for the Southwest Michigan Sierra Club Group; has participated in several marches around the country for environmental justice; and participates monthly with an Interfaith network of leaders from ten local congregations called “Hope for Creation,” whose faith traditions (including Christians, Jews, and Unitarian Universalists) teach that people and the planet flourish when social and natural communities are in harmony.

Nancy is taking a college course at WMU entitled “Spirituality and the Environment,” and feels honored and grateful to be a part of the Core Team for the EarthCare Ministry Team.

Healthy eating mentor **Rev. Grace** has been invited to give a 20-minute presentation during a conference at Shipshewana, Indiana. She also has an opportunity to speak at the Great Lakes regional conference, October 1-8. The Mindful Meeting mentoring call is the third Wednesday of each month at 4 p.m. (CT).

EarthCare Seeking Grant Funds

The Core Team may apply for a grant to greatly enhance its ability to attend the national and regional conferences, create promotional material, train facilitators, and present the symposium “[Awakening the Dreamer Through Unity](#).” The grant would also enable the team to provide more assistance to congregations interested in starting environmental programs. Nancy Appel is working with Unity Worldwide Ministries to make these goals a reality.

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Our Spiritual Social Action

By Ron Habin, Ph.D., Chair, EarthCare Ministry Team

These are certainly challenging times. It seems each day brings news of the latest shortcoming. It is appropriate, therefore, for the Unity EarthCare Team and our Unity supporters to again think about and discuss the idea of social activism and justice. In a practical sense, it's helpful to ask, "How do we show up when fundamental values such as truth and morality are up for grabs?"

We begin to answer questions such as these guided by our team's own principles featured on our web page (unity.org/earthcare):

"Ecological Social Justice: Promote an environmentally socially just world that is free from oppression and discrimination against people, and the inhumane treatment of animals."

This powerful statement can be interpreted as an ethical critique of the U.S. government's treatment of the undocumented. We believe children forcibly separated from their parents, people fleeing personal oppression, and those escaping gang violence and drug cartels should be treated with great dignity. We affirm their ultimate admission to the country called "the land of the free," to pursue the immigrant's dream of a fulfilling life for themselves and their families.

We are charged to begin every action with prayer. We may ask if we are truly being called to make a positive difference in this situation. If so, we are guided by our fifth Unity principle: "Knowing the laws of Truth is not enough. A person must live the truth he/she knows."

It seems informative to review the admonitions from some luminaries. For example, Jesus said, "Be in the world, not of the world." I interpret that to mean we are spiritual beings having a human experience. If we are called to an action, we participate. Then, go home and, for example, perfect your brand-new tofu recipe. One need not be dramatically attached to an outcome.

Mother Teresa said, "If you have a protest against something (even war), count me out. But if you start an action for a positive outcome, count me in." Fortunately, today we are aware of many positive actions we can start or support. In the recent past, we have observed or participated in a women's march for full equality and nationwide events on the vision of comprehensive firearm safety.

Completing our examples of how to show up when we are called, we are reminded of the words of not Jesus but a wise atheist. Pete Seeger advised, "Take it easy, but take it."

On our most recent UET conference call, we began to discuss a contemporary political refrain of our time. Many citizens are advised to "join the resistance." Well, *A Course in Miracles* admonishes us that "what we resist, persists." For some, resistance means supporting a certain candidate. That awareness of and participation in our democratic process is wonderful. Yet voting a particular way to "resist" seems less helpful than voting *for a candidate's* personal

comportment and their guiding philosophy. I think it's best and kinder to support a candidate who shares one's principles and ideas rather than voting against anyone. Our goal is to bring down walls of fear and separation and try to energize empathy. I do not want the virus of resistance in any part of my mind, body, or soul.

As per our Unity principles, we are the recipients of so much grace. Our foundational principles and the word of God light the path of love for us through the outer circumstantial turmoil. Unity principles in perpetuity provide our means to nurture a world that works for all.

New and Certified EarthCare Congregations

Congratulations to two congregations for their certification as EarthCare congregations!

On April 22, 2018, **Unity of North Kansas City, Missouri**, senior minister Rev. Myra McFadden adopted a covenant of EarthCare, thereby completing Level A on the path to EarthCare.



Unity of Kalamazoo, Michigan, senior minister Rev. Joslyn Mason (*left*, at Unity People's Convention 2018 with EarthCare chair Mike McCord) was certified at Level C on June 1, 2018. Unity of Kalamazoo has completed all seven steps on the path to EarthCare. In doing so, they have made care for the earth an integral part of their spiritual message.

Unity of the Mohave Valley, Bullhead City, Arizona, senior minister Rev. Maryann Shepherd has been certified at Level C. The congregation had previously been certified at Level B. The team is pictured *below* during a recent park cleanup project.

Congratulations to Unity of the Mohave Valley for completing the path to EarthCare!

Currently, 44 congregations have made a commitment to the environment through the EarthCare program since its inception in 2009.



2018 Congregational Green Star Award Recipients

The purpose of the Congregational Green Star Award is to acknowledge congregations who have completed a minimum of three activities during the past calendar year that promote the mission of EarthCare, “To foster awareness of our spiritual oneness with the Earth, and promote active care of all creation.” This year, five congregations received the award. They are:

- **Unity of the Blue Ridge**, Mills Creek, North Carolina, senior minister Rev. Darlene Strickland
- **Unity Church of Overland Park**, Kansas, transitional minister Rev. David Mosher
- **Unity Bay Area Houston**, League City, Texas, senior minister Rev. Kyra Baehr
- **Unity North Atlanta**, Marietta, Georgia, senior minister Rev. Richard Burdick
- **Unity of Kalamazoo**, Michigan, senior minister Rev. Joslyn Mason

While a minimum of three activities are required, all of the congregations did many more. This is the second consecutive year Unity of the Blue Ridge and Unity Church of Overland Park have received the award.

Congratulations from the EarthCare Team to all 2018 Green Star Recipients!

Unity of Fairfax, “Sacred Grounds Recognition”

The [National Wildlife Federation](#) (NWF) recently named **Unity of Fairfax, Oakton, Virginia**, as one of the first recipients nationwide of the Sacred Grounds Certification. The award recognizes congregations that actively care for wildlife and the environment. A delegation of NWF members from around the country toured Unity of Fairfax’s five-acre campus in Oakton to learn about the church’s extensive environmental projects including a green roof, ecological storm water management, meditation garden with native plants, and bluebird sanctuary project.

“This is a new program of the National Wildlife Federation, and we are very pleased today to be here to give Unity of Fairfax one of the first designations of the Sacred Grounds program in the nation,” said Naomi Edelson, NWF’s senior director of wildlife partnerships. “Unity of Fairfax, you are a model for the nation, and we hope that you will set the stage for thousands of congregations in this country and even beyond to be stewards for our wildlife and our water.”

[Sacred Grounds™](#) is a new National Wildlife Federation [Garden for Wildlife™](#) program that recognizes congregations, houses of worship, and faith communities. Both entities create wildlife habitat and actively link faith practices and caring for the environment.

“This is a part of our practice of our faith, which comes from knowing the oneness of all life,” said Rev. Russell Heiland, senior minister for Unity of Fairfax. “It is our intention and our calling to take care of one another.”

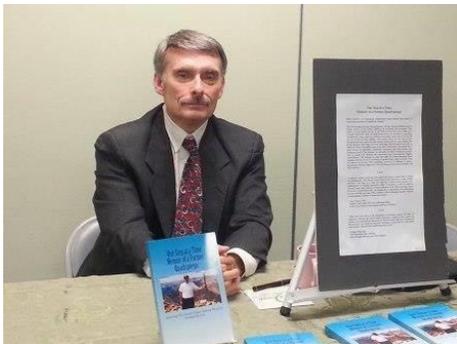
Unity of Fairfax has been focused on environmental activity and awareness since the EarthCare Ministry Team was formed in 2009. In addition to caring for the church's five acres, which are planted with a wide variety of native plants, the EarthCare Team has spearheaded such projects as creation of a detention pond and riparian buffer, the implementation and maintenance of a vegetative green roof on one of the buildings, educational partnerships with the Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions, extensive programs for Earth Day, and much more.

Unity of Fairfax has been designated by Fairfax County as a demonstration site to provide education to the community on best practices in storm water management. The congregation works with Northern Virginia Community College to educate earth science classes on environmental issues. In addition, Unity of Fairfax is a wildlife habitat certified by the National Wildlife Federation since 2005.

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