



Green Sanctuary
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
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Application for Green Sanctuary Accreditation

Congregation Information

Date of submission:
December 2016

Congregation Name:
Unitarian Universalist
Church of Kent

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Kent, OH 44240

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Minister or Congregation Leader
The Rev Melissa Carvill-Ziemer

Congregation Profile

See Application for Candidacy. There has been significant leadership change since the UUCK was granted Green Sanctuary Candidacy status. Our beloved minister for the last decade, the Rev Melissa Carvill Ziemer, accepted a new position with the UUA as Associate Executive Director of the Unitarian Universalist Minister Association. She assumed a half-time role in the UUCK October 1 and gave her final service November 20, 2016. An interim minister will join the congregation in February. While this significant void will be long felt, the efforts of the church

are in the capable hands of strong leaders and exceptional support staff: our Community Minister, Rev. Renee Ruchotzke, our Affiliated Minister and certified Lay Minister, Christy Anderson, our additional certified Lay Minister Lori Fatchet-McGee, our two CML candidates Cal Frye and Lisa Thiel, and Intern Minister Dave Clements and our Ministries Executive Team with Sandra Eaglen (Finance) and MaryBeth Hannan (our Congregational Administrator).

Congregational Vote

At the November Board of Trustees meeting the Board voted unanimously to call a congregational meeting to discuss and vote on submitting the UUCK Application for Green Sanctuary Accreditation. Four documents were made available on-line and in hard copy for congregants to review starting Monday, December 5, 2016: The *UUCK Application for GS Candidacy*, the report letter of the UUA review committee granting GS Candidacy, the *Application for GS Accreditation* and the Ballot. After two weeks of conversation, acquiring feedback and integrating results, on Sunday, December 18, 2016 at 1pm, a congregational meeting to share highlights of the green sanctuary process and application (2009-2016) was followed by a vote: *To authorize the Green Sanctuary Team to submit the Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent's Application for GS Accreditation to the Unitarian Universalist Association.* The results:

UU Identity and Spirituality See UUCK GS Candidacy Application.

Completion of 4 Action Plans

- 1. Environmental Justice** (1 required)
- 2. Worship and Celebration** (3 required: Show relevance to the different age groups. One should be ongoing for the foreseeable future. At least one should be related to environmental justice.)
- 3. Religious Education** (3 required: one must be related to environmental justice, show relevance to the different age groups. One ongoing for the foreseeable future.)
- 4. Sustainable Living** (4 required: 1 that addresses climate change, and 1 addressing a result from your environmental justice assessment)



Figure 1 We are beings of the natural world

1. Environmental Justice Project

Project Title: *Cultivating a Local Community Environment with Food for All*

Project Description and Action: The *Food for All* project is sensitive to many facets of this issue, i.e. physical, social, environmental, economic, educational, political related to water, soil, energy use, gardening. This project connects with elements in the four theme areas of our GS work as laid out in the Candidacy Application.

The most fully developed part of this project has been evolving since 2009 and focuses on our partnership with Kent Social Services (KSS), the Center for Hope, and the Akron Canton Regional Food Bank to ensure food for all community members in need – including providing meals on one day of the week that was not previously part of the local program. We continue to work with people struggling with the challenges of poverty including local homeless shelters Miller House and Freedom House and Empower Portage.

Timeline for Completion: See Candidacy application. (Abbreviated here.)

Partnership with Kent Social Services, Trinity Lutheran Church and others

2009 -2016 Minister served on KSS Advisory Board; partnership evolves

2010-2014 *Intentional and Ethical Eating* forums and conversations; *Dinners for the Earth*

2015 *Permaculture course* & learning with community people and groups; projects

2016 July: special collection for *Love Light*, a local children’s food group supported over several years;

December Special Collections for *Freedom House, Miller Community House;*
Plant Based Eating Group monthly

2015-2018 UUCK permaculture and food forest design, preparation, implementation.

Figure 2 Kent Social Services Organizer and Chef accept special collection donation



Outcomes: Our minister, the Rev Melissa Carvill-Ziemer served on the KSS Advisory Board since 2009, and noted the ways in which the requests of the KSS advisory board are informed by those for whom the services are designed and how that in turn affects the requests we make to the KSS. To be specific in just three ways –

1. The community members served pointed out that with KSS closed on Saturday, there was no place in Kent for those in need to get a hot meal on Saturdays. The Trinity Lutheran Church started the interfaith Saturday hot meal program as a response and we participate as a partner.
2. Our youth group has participated in preparing and serving a Saturday meal, which they then reflected on together, and so learning more about the challenges of hunger and poverty and especially about themselves in relationship to those realities.

3. In addition, our liaison, Elaine Bowen, often makes specific requests of food items to donate to KSS in our ongoing food drive, which come from community member requests/preferences when they use the food pantry.

An important outcome is that this process is becoming more reciprocal, with acknowledged benefits to all. That is, the participants in the services, become both those who *began as 'giving'* and those who *began as 'needing'* the services. Rather than 'providers' and 'recipients,' or 'makers' and 'consumers', all involved give and receive – generating an evolving process that enriches everyone.

Another link in the food insecurity web is the relationship between the Farmers Market and KSS. The farmers market provides an option for farmers to donate unsold produce at the end of each market to KSS. Hundreds of pounds of produce were collected by church member Mary Ann Kasper, and donated to KSS in 2016. We are growing in both our collective and our individual abilities to work together and to contribute our time and labor in making local food available to those with needs, while educating our collective selves in the process. We keep uncovering different ways we can identify and stand against harming the environment (mechanical and chemical harm to soil and consequences to water and air that affect local farmers and produce) while concomitantly enhancing our capacities to support local food networks and cooperatives. Our congregation has a long-standing relationship with the Kent Environmental Council, and support of the Farmer's Market. In an earlier time, UUCK had members as vendors to benefit the church. UUCK also donated money to dedicate a bench at the market site. Andrew Rome, of our congregation, became the coordinating manager of the market summer 2016.

Another direct link with the insecurity web is an outgrowth of the GS Sustainable Living project of designing and implementing sustainable gardens, not only at the church, but also in the community. UUCK members are well represented in the membership of the Portage County Master Gardeners. With that connection, the UUCK Green sanctuary effort identified a wonderful opportunity to work with Kent State University's Child Development Center (CDC) in cultivating permaculture gardens with children and teachers and community members. Two aspects of this garden are mentioned here: The design and creation of the garden and drawing together members of food related community gardens to share experiences, expertise and plans. (See Appendix A.) This project provides direct evidence of "learning both from these groups and engaging in generative conversation and action that build community *with* and *for*." The CDC requested help with the Learning Lab Gardens at the Center, and the lead church permaculture person worked with the CDC and Portage County Master Gardeners to plan, work with teachers, children, and parents in cultivating the gardens using permaculture methods. Whereas "helping" others often means "delivering" services to those others, this project was mutual and generative from the beginning. Instead of telling the children about the plants, for example, the master gardener teachers learn to listen and work reciprocally with the children and others. We learn from the children. There was no grand plan separate from the school or the gardeners – these are evolving gardens that give back to the community, including KSU's Campus Kitchen. According to CDC environmental educator Terri Cardi *We have gone over [to Campus Kitchen] with the children to make stuffing for Thanksgiving, pack food for Ravenna children with food insecurities to take home for the weekend, once a week made food that the college students take*

to Akron on Fri night to feed the homeless. Our goal is to grow enough produce to donate to Campus Kitchen. Plants are often donated (e.g. Kent Garden Club) and food in turn goes to feed the children and ultimately, it is planned, to those in the community most in need.



Figure 3 Exploring nature in garden straw

Figure 4 Growing food together in sustainable gardens

See Appendix A

A final example of the growth and leveraging of the Environmental Justice Project (See 2010 Intentional and Ethical Eating Group) is the Plant Based Diet Affinity group (that has of this application 27 members on the email list) that meet once a month for a pot-luck meal where participants view video clips and discuss matters related to sustainable eating for earth and its inhabitants. Trish McLoughlin and Rhonda Richardson co-lead this vital and growing group. That began as a UUCK group and is expanding to include community members.

Facilitators - Lead: Elaine Yehle Bowen (licensed dietitian, *Coordinator of Hunger and Economic Justice Task Group; works closely with Kent Social Services*). There have been several leaders, including small group leadership depending on the project: Lois Weir, Jennifer May, Kathy Kerns (*Intentional Eating*), Claudia Miller, Mary Ann Kasper, Gary Kasper, Mary Lou Holly (*Permaculture Course and Site Plan*), Andrew Rome (*Dinner for the Earth; Kent farmer's Market*), Shirley Kiernan (*Greening of Social Hour*), Trish McLoughlin and Rhonda Richardson (*Plant Based Eating Affinity Group*).

2. Worship and Celebration Projects

Project Title: *Precious Water: Cultivating Awareness and Action*



Assessment result you are responding to: See Candidacy Application; project also relates to Environmental Justice and Sustainable Living, permaculture and recycling/reusing.

Project Description and Action: This project includes taking action on multiple fronts that influence water quality and the consequences of water quality to the web of life. Though much has been accomplished since 2009 (detailed below), this is a continuing project. Many activities, workshops, and programs are encompassed and related to all four theme-areas (W&C,RE, SL, EJ) of this application.

Precious Water workshops: This multi-generational event with workshops featured the opportunity for members and friends to learn about water conservation. Children took a tour of the church seeing and learning various ways in which we use and try to conserve water. We hosted a speaker from an organization working to create water access for communities in El Salvador. Another workshop took participants across the street to the Cuyahoga River to learn about river health and participate in water sampling. Back at the church several members and friends made rain barrels, several of which (or their descendants) are still in use.

Armed with small posters for home mirrors and refrigerators: “44 things you can do to conserve water” many congregants continue to keep in mind and to shrink their water footprints. More than one person we talked with continues to consult the poster. New posters on the large environmental bulletin board related to water and climate change are designed to provoke thought and continuing conversation. We will revisit the topic early next year with a Congregational water survey.

Figure 5 Some of the 2016 Cuyahoga River Riparian Zone UUCK Trash Collectors



River Clean up: This annual event usually held in May in collaboration with the city's River Day has been taking place for over 20 years. In addition to clean up, it has also featured a garlic mustard pull (which is an invasive species that *threatens* the health of the embankment by the river). This year we offered two events in August 2016, both coordinated with the City of Kent: one for all ages cleaning the riparian zone along the river (weed of some invasive species as well as trash this year), and one for those able and willing to walk in the river and haul out debris.

Kent Bog Preservation: The church choir completed a CD called *Hi Ho, The Rattlin' Bog* as a fundraiser for preservation of the local bog. One of our members (now deceased), Gordon Vars, took leadership on this important issue years ago, and through his tireless efforts, the bog is protected and maintained, and formally, as of 2015, named for him.

FrogWatch Workshops and Certifications: Two Biology faculty members from Hiram College - church member Cara Constance & Jennifer Clark from Frog Watch USA. Cara and Jennifer presented an overview of the program and taught participants about the different habits, sounds and identification of frogs and how we can help to sustain their habitats. Several of us *hear* differently as a result, including spring peepers and wood frogs (April 29, 2014). We expect a growing number of people will participate in the winter 2017 (Jan-Feb) workshop and certification exam where, as citizen scientists we collect data and contribute to a larger data base.

Sunday Service (Time For All Ages) Story: The life cycle of a plastic water bottle. While environmental justice is hardly rare in our services, we recount one recent example that visibly inspired congregational response. Responses to the presentation were strongly positive, with many congregants noting surprise at the magnitude of the consequences to the earth - from gyres to pollution on beaches and to effects on wildlife from birds to fish to humans. Many people vowed to purchase fewer plastic water bottles and switch to carrying long-term water bottles. (As of spring 2016, we are selling re-useable water bottles with the church generated UUCK symbol for green living – both to limit plastic and to celebrate 150 years).

Rain Gardens: As part of site planning for our church expansion, the permaculture group in consultation with others are developing plans for a rain garden system (bioswale) to support the ecosystem, cultivate beauty and awareness of how nature sustains life, and importantly, to enhance water retention and use on campus, mitigating the water that runs into the river and Kent city septic systems. In addition to bulletin boards and congregational envisioning (see guided meditation below) of the proposed gardens, there is a call to donate plants to the site. Mitigation of storm water as well as retention is part of on-going planning for the church campus to be implemented after construction is complete (hopefully in 2017).

Timeline for Completion:

See UUCK GS Candidacy Application for an extended accounting of what has been accomplished. What follows are a few things that are continuing into 2017:

Winter 2017 - *FrogWatch Workshop and Certification*

April 2015 - 2017 - and beyond: site planning, planting, cultivation of UUCK campus rain gardens and storm water mitigation – to be completed after new building construction.

Lead/Facilitators: Ted Voneida, Swanny Voneida, Patty Miller (workshops), Claudia Miller, Mary Ann Kasper, Gary Kasper, John Brovarone, Barbara Brovarone, Mary Louise Holly (gardens), Cara Constance (Frogwatch)

Outcomes: There is a much more water conscious congregation as a result of this project. Fewer plastic water bottles are visible in church, both from congregants and from water served in pitchers at events. Many people can be heard apologizing when using a plastic water bottle, saying that this is unusual. In addition to the favorable response of workshop participants after the rain barrel workshop and other events of that day (See report in UUCK GS Candidacy Application, Appendix F), there are at least five more rain barrels in use at congregants' homes than there were before. There is much greater interest in the topic of water and efforts to capture it on site on our new campus as we plan for the rain gardens and permaculture practices of sustainability. Fourteen people mentioned appreciation for the guided imagery in church of the new gardens (including rain). River day clean-ups expanded to two days and participants have mentioned that their "bodily clean-up sensors" are working overtime as a result – they are seeing trash and picking it up as they walk along the river – and this has spread to elsewhere. The outcome for the river clean-up this August alone included: Between *400 and 500 pounds* of trash was taken from the riparian zone and water's edge while on the first day by church members and a city official, and *4-5 tons* of trash (80-90 tires alone!) was taken from the river on the second day with community members. Seventeen church members participated, and most enjoyed celebratory conversation over fruit pops after the multiage riparian zone clean-up.

Two key outcomes of this project are 1. the plan for rain gardens and work with the congregation and city on storm water mitigation and retaining water on site for reuse, and 2. Better understanding of the interdependent web of all existence and the need for clean water related to food insecurity; why earth fracturing is a hazard to the earth – both in terms of destabilization but also because of the chemicals injected into the earth, not only for drinking water, but for growing food. Neither of these things was anything but a blip on the consciousness screen for all but a few congregants before our commitment to making water a priority.

Project Title: *Bringing Balance: Meditation and Memorial Gardens*

Assessment result you are responding to: We have sought to bring balance into our lives as both environmental and social systems strain under life in the Anthropocene epoch and the climate change and the civil unrest we continue to fuel. *A meditation and memorial garden* has been on the drawing board since 2009 as part of the congregation's commitment and plan to become a green sanctuary church.

Project Description and Action: There are two related components to this project: spiritual and physical. Quiet time and guidance for reflection and meditation during each church service has become a more comfortable way to gain a sense of balance in a time of growing social and environmental unrest. We have implemented a diversity of kinds of reflection and meditation including music, movement, yoga, visualization, and most recently a very well received musical-visual meditation: *John Muir Meditation* with slides and excerpts from his environmental journeys. The second part of this project included generating plans for a Memorial garden.

Timeline for Completion: As reported in the UUCK GS Candidacy application, most of the plans have been completed. The Memorial garden plans continue to evolve from the site plan and will be implemented after building construction has been completed (2017?).

Outcomes: There is a visible difference in meditation and reflective time during church services. Though not quantifiable and certainly linked with externalities (e.g. environmental disasters, war, politics), our abilities to ground ourselves has been much enhanced by Rev Melissa's magical ways of helping us to connect – internally, with each other, and to larger ways of seeing and being. We have learned and will continue to practice. There is more depth and breadth in participation, in part related to the different forms of mediation (e.g. music, participatory prayer, visual, guided, use of artifacts like pipe cleaners) but also related to the comfort that many people have gained with the process. From *I hate quiet time!* to *I am more comfortable with quiet time, it still isn't my favorite time in the service, but I feel more relaxed. And I wouldn't say I have become a meditator, but I am more comfortable with the silence.* Whereas in 2009 - 2010 and even 2011, 2012, and 2013, the length of time for quiet and meditative time was a cause for fidgeting and visible agitation in some, it is much less so now – you will see a person or two slowly knitting, or quietly working a pipe cleaner into various shapes. As one of our Board members commented, *I have noticed a remarkable change in my now eleven year old grandson's ability to be at "peace" with himself during our meditative and reflective times.* A greater number of the Worship Associates are playing a role in the meditational aspects of the service than was the case in earlier years of the GS process. Lisa, Thiel, our CLM candidate, for example, has plans for a meditative boot-camp and on-going workshops.

Our tangible recent advance and outcome is related to the meditational-memorial gardens: now we have *plans*, when before GS we had none. Now we have a site plan, and agreement on various aspects of the gardens (e.g. location, some of the plants), where we started with *It would be nice to have a memorial garden.* Now we have congregants asking *How can we honor loved ones in our garden?* The congregation has dreamed together about the gardens in guided meditation, and brought their ideas to the planning process. Some people have already begun to volunteer plants and materials. There is a sense of "real" about the garden whereas it was a

distant future idea in 2009. Many people have commented on how much more real the process feels now that they have been part of an envisioning process. The bulletin boards (on what was an empty wall in 2009 -- built as part of the GS process for communication) enable continuing conversation and dialog about the building and gardens. *Here are the latest site plans – what do you think?* (with cards and stick pins to leave visible comments, suggestions and questions.)

Lead: The Rev Melissa Carvill Ziemer, Music Director Hal Walker, and Worship Associates including Lisa Thiele, Site plan committee (Mary Ann Kasper, Gary Kasper, Claudia Miller, John Brovarone, Barbara Brovarone, Mary Louise Holly).

Project Title: *Services related to the 7th UU Principle; 150 Year Centennial Celebration of UUCK: 2016*

Assessment result you are responding to: We have a long, strong legacy as detailed in the Candidacy application, so suffice it to say here, that with our growing congregation it was time to peer into our past and explore our roots while looking into the future we are called to live into as stewards of an imperiled earth. See the Candidacy application (especially Appendix B) for Services related to the 7th UU Principle. See Appendix B this application for *Historical Look*.

Project Description and Action: See UUCK GS Candidacy application. We have intentionally integrated the UU 7th principle into services each year from 2009, especially into this year, 2016, our 150th year celebration. Each month we have reconnected with our heritage while enriching and expanding our efforts to live greener lives, individually, and as a congregation.



Figure 6 Plum Creek Park Celebration with Minister and Board of Trustees

Timeline for Completion: By the end of August 2016 the time sensitive goals we had proposed had been met. The more important part of this completion is that the relationships, habits of mind and our evolving aspirations for greening our church continue. Services that exemplify the foundations of our church have been strongly reinforced and we have established bridges (especially Worship Associates) and steps (continuing traditions e.g. Earth day, Dinners for the Earth, River Days, Garlic Mustard – Invasive Species removals) into related works much stronger likelihood of continuing.

Outcomes: The strong foundations of our heritage and the resources available to us are now part of the landscape of our thinking while these were only vague recollections before we began our GS Environmental Assessment and began the formal process of studying ourselves as UUs who pledge our commitment to living the 7th principle. We have been doing this in bits and pieces – probably forever -- now it is a more connected, intentional, integrated and grounded process.

To take just two recent months as an example, we have exceeded even our hopes for fulfilling our goals. In July, our *We Hunger for Justice* social actions were met with amazing generosity and tremendous success. The response to the food and gift card collection for Kent Social Services exceeded all expectations. The goal of \$150 in Acme gift cards was doubled with a total of \$300 worth of cards = 20 - \$10 cards plus 4 - \$25 cards. The goal of 150# of food was met and exceeded 98# for a total of 248#. Total collection of 252 items included 65 boxes/bags of cereal, 31 jars of peanut butter, 28 packages of rice/beans/pasta and 128 cans of fruit, vegetables, tuna/chicken, ravioli and other assorted canned products. As, Elaine Bowen (See also *Environmental Justice*), the lead for the *Hunger for Justice* month put it: *Happy 150th Anniversary, UU Church of Kent . . . we did our ancestors proud. We did ourselves proud. We did our community proud.*

In August, our environmental month, we began with a highly successful Clinton Hobbes (the distinguished Biologist for whom our new fellowship hall will be named) Memorial Garden Tour with four church member families taking us into their gardens. Thirty-two people were on this tour where they learned first hand about permaculture in two gardens and beheld amazing bounty in two other earth-friendly and sustaining gardens. Ending with a bountiful dinner, this was a bridge between July's emphasis on *hunger and food for all* and led into August's extending considerations of stewardship of the earth. The Sunday, August 7, very well attended and appreciated church service was dedicated to exploring the life and wisdom of John Muir. As one congregant wrote: *"Really enjoyed and learned much from the August Service."* This was followed by a multigenerational team (17 people) of congregants working with an official from the City of Kent in cleaning trash from the riparian zone of the Cuyahoga River. Our goal was 150 lbs – we collected between 400-500lbs. Three congregants participated in a second in-the-river-community trash clean-up on August 20th that netted between 4 -5 tons of trash (See *Precious Water Project* above). The Library, Kent Environmental Council and GS sponsored the film viewing of *This Changes Everything* and conversation on August 19th. Of the eight participants several noted that this was an excellent follow-up to the Library – Kent Environmental Council's fall 2015 Climate Change panel. On August 19th we held a *Potluck Dinner for the Earth* where people brought locally harvested and purchase foods to share. That same evening there was a Park Picnic for parents with young children. On August 28, the final environmental event for the August celebration was *Pancakes with Earth in Mind* where fresh and local foods were emphasized and foods for all dietary preferences were provided – now a

much more common practice. Response to local food and information from local vendors was very well received. In addition to between forty and 60 people enjoying the food, there were many questions and indications people wanted to continue these practices, not the least of which started this fall with a *Plant Based Eating Affinity Group* (See Sustainable Living: The Greening Of Social Hour).

Lead: Rev Melissa Carvill Ziemer, Minister, Kathie Slater, chair Board of Trustees, and the entire 150th anniversary committee (10+ members; especially Elaine Bowen and Mary Lou Holly).

Figure 7 Preparing for EarthDay & timeline of UUCK History



Figure 8 Hello critter!



3. Religious Education Projects

Project Title: *Ministry for the Earth Gardening and Stewardship*

Assessment Result you are responding to: The original conversations and commitment of the congregation to becoming a greener church (2009) included creating and implementing curricula for all ages (children, youth, adults, multiage) with a distinctively earth stewardship orientation and engagement, and the dream of creating children's and memorial gardens.

Project Description and Action: See UUCK GS Candidacy Application.

As well as creating a ministry for the earth foundation of stewardship within the curriculum for all ages (classes, resources and library, films, workshops, forums, and services), a second related part of this project dealt with initial planning, creating and cultivating both children's and meditative memorial gardens. With the acquisition of a house-lot adjacent to the church, and initial planning for expansion that this lot enabled, we began to conceptualize the land as an integrated campus with sustainable gardening including a rain garden and a pollinator garden.

Timeline for Completion: See UUCK GS Candidacy Application. Creation and implementation will continue over the next two years (2017-2019) starting with the rain gardens that are central to water capture and mitigation related to the church's new building construction (tentatively to begin Spring 2017). (See Timeline for Completion in Candidacy Application for specific accomplishments and dates.)

Outcomes: Plans for the campus and gardens, have been developed by the participants in the Permaculture Subcommittee, in consultation with two experienced landscape architects and with continuing feedback and ideas from members of all ages in the congregation. On-going development, creation and stewardship with congregants will continue indefinitely, with the most important aspects for this application having been accomplished over the last two years.

Our congregants continue to identify, create and implement a robust curriculum of green learning and stewardship for all ages not the least of which were rain barrels and the children created bird houses that went home with the children and are a continuing topic of conversation and education for families. (See also UUCK GS Candidacy Application and Appendix C *Hogwarts* in this application. See also *Sustainable Living*.) We continue to build Stewardship into related projects: River Day, Garlic Mustard Pull, Earth Day Celebrations and writing cards to members of Congress on behalf of the earth.

Valentines for the earth and card writing as a part of Earth Day services generates between 16-32 valentines (affixed to our large balloon earth or to the wall behind it) and 50 – 80 cards to Congress each year, and well represents all ages in our congregation, from “early artists and writers” to our most senior seniors.

Lead: Karen Lapidus (former Director RE), Mary Leeson, Colleen Thoele, Karen LoBracco (Interim Director RE), Patty Miller; Claudia Miller, Mary Ann Kasper, Gary Kasper, Mary Lou Holly (Permaculture Subcommittee), and Lily Rappaport (new Director RE).



Figure 7 Bones?



Figure 8 . . .and ways to investigate them

Project Title: *Environmental Justice Film Series*

Assessment result you are responding to: See UUCK GS Candidacy Application.

Project Description and Action: See UUCK GS Candidacy Application. Naomi Klein's thought provoking book became an acclaimed documentary film: *The Changes Everything*. This was shown and discussed in August, 2016, and will be repeated this winter (2017).

Timeline for Completion: See UUCK GS Candidacy Application. We anticipate continuing films in 2017. Two films have already been selected, one each for January and February, *Before the Flood* from National Geographic and *This Changes Everything* by Naomi Klien. *Planetary*, another powerful film, is being screened as another candidate. In the Fall term there were other UUCK theme related films shown.

Outcomes: See UUCK GS Candidacy Application. In addition to the project information and appendices in the Candidacy Application, the GS team has acquired two addition films, one of which was shown and discussed in August 2016 (See below under *Green Library*), and because of the theme of Climate Change and the quality of the film and discussion, *This Changes Everything*, and a recent related article by the author, Naomi Klein, the film will be offered again spring 2017. Each of the film/discussion sessions, were held on Friday evenings, often with stiff competition for time. While people found some of the films unsettling and sometimes learned things they would rather not know, each of the films provided fodder for thought provoking discussions. With only a few exceptions, each film was well received by the 7-16 people participating. Depending on the film, the audience included people from ages 12-90. DIRT was popular with all ages, for example, while *This Changes Everything* was attended and appreciated by adults only, who highly recommended that the opportunity be repeated because *This film helped me see the larger contexts of climate change and the major players. I never would have questioned or made the connections that are so obvious to me now that I have seen the film. Who would have questioned the Nature Conservancy and other large environmental groups?*

Although the audiences are often not as robust as we would like to have, the quality of the discussion and the enthusiasm of those attending, including the fall-out over time (*A turning point for me was Cowspiracy; it pushed me over the edge!; When are you going to show more films?*) - leads us to believe that this is worth the effort. Another benefit is the networking of people and groups as a result of the film discussions. A local organic farmer participated in the showing of *Cowspiracy* and has been part of several other green related events since then, donating food and information to the *Greening of Social Hour* events as well. We have drawn in community members who were not members to some of the films and in a few cases they have returned to the church several times since (even bringing other family members). Another benefit is the recommendations that come from participants. Two films related to the Environmental Justice project have been reviewed and are part of the growing list of recommended films for spring 2017. And, the films find their way into the growing *Green Library*, thereby extending their potential influence.

Lead/Facilitators: Mary Lou Holly, Patty Miller, Andrew Rome, Bill Wilen





	<p>Fed Up lays bare a decades-long misinformation campaign orchestrated by Big Food and aided by the U.S. Government: telling how far more of us are sick from what we are eating than anyone has ever realized.</p>	
	<p>Friday, February 6th, 7pm UUCK - Fessenden Hall DIRT! The Movie brings to life the environmental, economic, social and political impact that the soil has.</p>	
	<p>Friday, February 20th, 7pm UUCK - Fessenden Hall COWSPIRACY: The Sustainability Secret investigates why leading environmental organizations are afraid to talk about the devastating</p>	

Figure 9 Environmental Justice Film Series

Project Title: *Green Library: Resources and Forums*

Project Description and Action: See UUCK GS Candidacy Application.

Timeline for Completion: See UUCK GS Candidacy Application.

Outcomes: See UUCK GS Candidacy Application. We have added a fairly robust section on the Environment in the Library as a result of this project and this will expand over time. A follow-up film and discussion related to the highly successful Climate Change Panel (Fall 2015) was presented during the 150th year Celebration in August 2016, the designated Environmental month of programs. While August was not the ideal month for attendance, the 8 enthusiastic people who participated in viewing the film: *This Changes Everything* and discussing the implications of this work and an article by the same author (Naomi Klein, *"The Radical Leap" March, 2016*),

there was the strong suggestion that this session be offered again during the regular school year when more people could be there.

If there could be only one “banner” event to support the green agenda of the church, the Climate Change Panel might be it. The church was almost filled to capacity with church members and community members from many different groups including Kent State and Kent Environmental Council, as well as people from Hiram and other near-by towns. “*Excellent!*” was the general comment of evaluation and was backed up by people commenting on the strength of the four panelists, their diversity, professionalism, and complementing of each other’s work. A biologist, a geologist, an educator and a field scientist were each lauded for their contributions to the panel. Moderated by Bill Wilen, an emeritus faculty member in Social Studies, and welcomed by Ann Waters, (whose librarian skills and commitment have, along with co-library chair Kathy Wilen, revolutionized the UUCK library) the event was well planned and organized so that the talents of the speakers could proceed unhindered by details. One outcome of this event: there was not sufficient time to process and extend the conversation. Energy filled the rooms and bubbled out into the aisles and hallway. The time flew by and ended with a reception in the library next to the sanctuary – convenient to explore the new Environmental section of materials. According to several people, the Climate Change Panel was a foundational to their thinking about Climate Change.

Lead: Ann Waters and Kathy Wilen (Library Committee Co-Chairs), Bill Wilen.

4. Sustainable Living

Project Title: *Cultivating Ecological Design - Permaculture Garden Campus*

Assessment result you are responding to: Opportunity for ecological design and linking with community members and groups related to food forests, water conservation, and recycling including composting. Being what we say - a community example of sustainable living.

Project Description and Action: (See UUCK GS Candidacy Application). A permaculture course offered at the UUCK with students from the church, the Kent Garden Club, Portage County Master Gardener Volunteers, and community members, taught by permaculture specialists from the First Unitarian Church of Cleveland, and a related site plan for the UUCK church campus

Timeline for Completion: See UUCK GS Candidacy Application for completed work and specifics of timeline. With Zoning and other details with building and code requirements under discussion with the city of Kent, garden preparation and planting will likely be moved to the fall 2017. The rain gardens will be the first new gardens begun after construction of the new Fellowship Hall, hopefully Fall 2017 and winter – spring 2017. Considerations of run-off and water retention are being studied and discussed with key people (City of Kent officials, architects, construction firms). The site planning for the memorial and meditation garden begun in 2015 continues in spring 2017.

Outcomes: As identified and reported in the UUCK GS Candidacy Application, much work has been completed and much remains. The two major items, *a permaculture course* and the initial *site plan for the UUCK campus*, have been completed. Twenty-seven people from various groups participated in the 10 session course, most of whom designed and have since implemented permaculture features in their landscapes., and some, the Potage County Master Gardeners, for example, have integrated permaculture features into their teaching and community service projects. Excellent progress has also been made in planning the specific church gardens and in on-going and initial gardening with the Building and Grounds Coordinator and team. We expanded our gardens with a robust spring planting, including many native plants, between the church and Annex. We had flowers for multiple uses, including services and celebrations, that continued from mid-summer until November, 2016.

A strong foundation for our Permaculture Garden Campus been developed involving events and celebrations, large educational bulletin boards, educational elements within Sunday services such as guided meditations in the proposed gardens and congregational updates. Visible changes are evident: beautiful summer-fall gardens on the “old” part of the UUCK campus, vibrant relations and work within the church and community related to sustainable landscaping and maintenance, (e.g. Kent Garden Club, Portage County Master Gardener Volunteers, Kent State University Child Development Center, First Unitarian Church of Cleveland), the 2016 UUCK Annual Clinton Hobbes Garden Tour included permaculture gardens in various levels of development, and the 2016 UUCK Annual Auction includes a Permaculture workshop and meal in January 2017.

Lead: Claudia Miller, Mary Ann Kasper, Gary Kasper, John Brovarone, Barbara Brovarone, Mary Lou Holly, Georgia Quinn and church gardeners, all in consultation with Tom Gibson* (First Unitarian Church of Cleveland, Permaculture specialist) and Elsa Johnson* (Landscape Architect) *Recipients of UUA Ministry for the Earth Award 2014 for permaculture gardens.



Figure 10 Site Plan includes Rain, Children’s, Meditation-Memorial and Pollinator Gardens



Figure 11 Permaculture Course - Planning gardens!

Project Title: *The Greening of Social Hour*

Assessment result you are responding to: See GS Candidacy Application.

Project Description and Action: See the GS Candidacy Application.

Timeline for Completion: See GS Candidacy Application. While we have completed the project that we set out to do, this is a never-ending process stimulating awareness and action. In 2017 we will continue to maintain and implement green practices, enhancing food and

materials as described in the GS Candidacy Application. We are expanding use of green cleaning materials, composting more and offering more earth and people-friendly nutritious foods at events. The changes made with this project will continue into practices in the new Fellowship Hall and renovation of the 1868 building where green practices are part of the planning and decision-making processes with respect to space, materials, light, aesthetics and equipment.



Figure 12 Greening of Social Hour

Outcomes: A continuing project, the *Greening of Social Hour* has been implemented slowly over the last few years. We have advanced far beyond coffee hour with Styrofoam cups and glazed doughnuts on disposable paper plates. The foods and snacks are more varied (fruits and vegetables in addition to cakes, pies, and crackers; gluten free offerings) and often labeled for those with special diets. Care is taken with products used (washable plates as opposed to paper). We display readily available bins for recycling and composting of left-over foods. We do the clean-up with earth-friendly products and are particularly pleased that one of our members undertook the task of learning to make her own and now shares them with us.



Figure 13 Shirley's Home Made Green Creations



Figure 14 David Does Green Serving

While *The Greening of Social Hour* is the focus of this project, it has expanded with people not normally involved in serving as hosts for this weekly event have become involved. We have influenced other social events and celebrations and see green practices reinforced and spreading into new venues. (Recent examples include pot lucks, picnics, ground breaking ceremonies and auction items. Even the *Election Night Dinner* transformed, where traditional fare was expanded with vegetarian and vegan options enabling at least 18 of 88 people to attend.)

Facilitators/ Lead: Kathie Slater (Board of Trustees). Others who supported earlier efforts that grew into this project include Lois Weir, Jennifer May, Kathy Kerns, Mary Lou Holly, Trish McLoughlin, Claudia Miller, Saunis Parsons (Fare Trade coffee, tea, chocolate etc), Shirley Kiernan (earth friendly practices and cleaning supplies), David Homsher (personing the kitchen).



Figure 15 Options for All, Even Green Desert Options, at 2016 UU Auction

Project Title: *Cultivating Awareness and Action: Refusing, Recycling, Re-using, and Composting; Electronics Recycling Review*

Assessment result you are responding to: See UUCK GS Candidacy Application. Thanks to the suggestion from reviewers of the Candidacy Application, we combined the *Electronics Recycling Project* previously under *Religious Education* with this project under *Sustainable Living*.

Project Description and Action: See UUCK GS Candidacy Application for details. This completed project is a long-term effort and includes our organic and inorganic recycling at church.

Timeline for Completion: See UUCK GS Candidacy Application.

Outcomes: The primary, and highly successful, outcome to date is the highly praised electronics recycling program at church. This promotes the slowly growing awareness within the church of the need for thinking before acquiring and using materials that are harmful to the environment. We are doing better at recycling materials that can be recycled and reusing materials and resources. We promote composting, which takes us into *regeneration*, not only reusing or replacing, but *generating* more than was there to begin with. Capturing, retaining and using water on site is part of this plan as well.

There have been numerous and well-received programs in church services providing focus on increasing awareness and action. After “The Life Cycle of a Plastic Water Bottle”, for example, many congregants reported a transformed view of the lowly plastic bottle, saying they had “no idea” this represented an extensive problem. We now see fewer plastic water bottles at church and appreciate the regular use of pitchers of water at events. In addition to electronics, we are recycling paper, glass, and plastic. Food scraps go to a “compost-bound bin” that will graduate into a well-designed and designated area for composting on our campus when the new fellowship hall is built. While more work remains to be done, there is a strong and growing foundation for this continuing work.

COMPOSTING:
please feed me

I will help build soil so the flowers grow. ...



Lead: Andrew Rome for *Electronics Recycling*; Georgia Quinn (buildings and grounds), Claudia Miller, Mary Ann Kasper, GaryKasper, John Brovarone, Barbara Brovarone, Mary Lou Holly (site plan committee) for recycling and composting aspects of the project.



Figure 16 Church Youth Explore Recycling



Figure 17 Sophie Takes a Look Inside

Project Title: *Reducing our Carbon Footprint in new and old buildings and campus renovations*

Assessment result you are responding to: See the GS Candidacy Application.

Project Description and Action: See the GS Candidacy Application.

The project envisions reducing consumption of petroleum-based products, reducing energy consumer and beneficial practices like permaculture and building green. The first action step in this project was to conduct the UUCK Energy Audit. The second action step was to begin the gradual implementation of suggestions for energy conservation. The audit provides a starting point for the three-tiered long-term plan for living the 7th UU principle. 1. Old buildings (Church, Eldrege Annex), 2. New buildings (fellowship hall) and grounds, and 3. The lives of congregants and friends. Action in all three areas is in process. Conservation, resiliency, and generativity are part of the lenses we are applying and developing as a result of the Energy Audit and our work toward becoming a green sanctuary; designing the UUCK campus and buildings – old and new - with earth in mind. We have been celebrating the steps as we go, with a well attended and regarded ground-breaking ceremony for the fellowship hall on October 2, 2016. Though the actual physical building construction will not take place until 2017, this ceremony was attended by over 100 people: congregants, planners (architect, construction company representatives) community members, city and government officials.



Timeline for Completion: See GS Candidacy Application. As noted, many of the project elements have been accomplished and others are in progress (implementation of Energy Audit suggestions). Some dates have changed since our Candidacy Application due to a few unanticipated issues beyond our control. So, 2016 dates for some things (e.g. building and landscaping) will begin in 2017.

Outcomes: The completed Energy Audit had reverberations well beyond what we anticipated when we opted for this in-house process. Conducting the audit ourselves took us into the depths and corners and provided a rare view of our facilities – house (Annex) and church as well as landscape. We began *seeing* energy and the many ways it escaped. Sometimes we fixed-as-we-went. We discovered low hanging fruit as well as those that can only be harvested in a few years when the renovation of our church takes place. We didn't set out to make detectives out of the people helping with the audit, but that was an outcome for at least a few people. An important outcome was learning to take a broader and deeper look at energy than we had done before. The GS framework was catalytic to doing the energy audit. It was viewed by many as an unnecessary expense to tell us what was obvious. By doing it ourselves, we avoided the expense and were rewarded with a highly personalized education about our facility. The audit confirmed some things that were already known (we need a new furnace!) and it presented new information (e.g. previously undetected heat leaks).

Conceptualizing the landscape and buildings as a campus – an integrated whole – was both inspiring and daunting. That the entire congregation has been involved in the work of planning

has been one of the most important outcomes and provided venue where our carbon footprint could be examined. Learning *how* to involve others in specific areas has been part of our learning – from the Board of Trustees to subcommittees for various aspects (e.g. Solar? Kitchen? Aesthetics?); not everyone needs to be involved in every decision but everyone needs to be engaged in ways that build community and the church’s future. Through spirited discussion we discovered that not all materials, decisions, and opinions, are of equal value. From a green perspective, decisions related to aesthetic considerations and financial considerations are not necessarily obvious, at least at first. Nor is how beauty and efficiency relate to what one sees and experiences; a sleek impervious paved surface may be to one beholder “beautiful” while to another a “disaster” for the river across the street that will get the storm water run-off. Long-term and short-term interests come into the deliberations. The life cycle of building materials matters more than expediency; short term and long term costs became part of our deliberations.

Suggestions from findings of the Energy Audit are slowly being implemented. Purchase decisions were made on some windows and doors, for example. Perhaps most importantly, we are using our new eyes and growing awareness of energy issues to inform our planning, research, and practices related to new building, renovation, and landscaping. Some physical holes have been filled in – basement of Annex, kitchen window insulation for two examples; workdays scheduled where people attend to energy and repair issues, and sign up sheets for more information on home energy audits. Research on solar panels and energy efficient kitchen equipment conducted by Building Expansion Team subcommittees, including research on water conservation with bioswales, rain gardens and recycling, as well as climate change panels and forums have been and are provoking generative conversations and actions related to our UUCK commitment to living our 7th principle.

Lead: 1. Building Expansion Team members: Mary Louise Holly, Matthew Slater, Randy Leeson, Lois Weir, Larry Johnson, 2. Site plan committee: Claudia Miller, Mary Ann Casper, Gary Casper, John Brovarone, Barbara Brovarone with Elsa Johnson (Landscape Architect) and Tom Gibson (Permaculture). 3. Energy Audit Team: Michael Lee, with Randy Ruchotzke, Larry Johnson, and, Georgia Quinn, the Building and Grounds Coordinator.



Figure 18 Our Audit by Our Members



Figure 19 Put Light on the Matter

Accomplishment of Program Goals

- Build awareness of the significance and complexity of environmental issues.
We started with a strong interest in becoming greener, but few of us understood what that would entail. There was genuine interest in environmental issues and this continues at a higher and more complex level than when we started. Water, for example, is now seen as an issue with far more implications than could have been imagined when we began – from global clean water issues (e.g. financial support for clean water in El Salvador and for water related catastrophes as in Louisiana) to capturing and filtering rainwater on local church grounds to continuing public actions related to injection wells and environmental health. Focused segments (e.g. “Life Cycle of a Plastic water bottle” and cleaning 500+ pounds of trash from the Cuyahoga river this summer alone) started in church services, and discussion after environmental films, for example, brought to light many issues that continue to be discussed and acted on as we plan water mitigation, containment, and use on our evolving church campus, and work with City Officials related to codes and zoning. Although our collaborative actions have not all been successful (local and state legislation to stop drilling) we continue these efforts.
- Encourage personal lifestyle changes
Water again provides a good example of how far we have come (and how far we have to go). Evidence? Visibly fewer plastic bottles and more re-useable bottles, some of the bottles purchased at church: UUCK metal bottles with our green symbol on them. Many people now offer unsolicited comments when using a plastic bottle – apologizing for their use (“*I left my water bottle in the car!*”) Our evidence includes self-report, and recycling bins and wastebaskets, people are more aware of recycling and they are doing more of it at home. With the decreased use of harsh chemicals in products at church there has been a concomitant growth in awareness by church members of their habits at home with a professed increased use of gentler earth friendly cleaning supplies. Sustainable gardening is another area where church opportunities and education have lead to increased use of permaculture and other sustainable practices in home and community gardens – both purported and visible as seen in the July 2016 Clinton Hobbes Garden tour where two of the four congregants’ gardens were overtly using permaculture methods, and the others integrated many principles of sustainability into their practices.

Intentional (Ethical) eating is another area showing visible changes in individual and family habits. A logical outgrowth of our Intentional Eating and other activities over the last seven years, a small group offering on “*plants based diets*” is sparking considerable conversation and interest – and continues with a growing number of members (email list 27) and well-attended monthly pot-luck suppers. When we started our GS process there were sparse vegetarian or vegan offerings in the yearly Auction. This has steadily grown over the years. This year for example, had 14 vegetarian or vegan meals offered – and the most interesting finding is that most of the participants who purchase these meals are either avowedly carnivorous or consciously adopting earth-friendlier meals. The most recent Auction dinner (December 3, 2016) included an in-house baked potato – quinoa *feast* for all food types – something that might not have happened in 2009.

We have come a long way with this – the examples cited in this application are testimony. In general, there has been and continues to be a slow and perceptible shift in considering ourselves more as stewards and part of nature, than as owners and dominators of nature. The frog on page 3 symbolizes this shift: who is “we”? The first of the UU 7 principles might better dance with the 7th principle and become *The inherent worth and dignity of every being*. This is consistent with the shift many congregants are learning about and adopting toward more sustainable landscapes at church and home. Ecosystems are becoming part of the consciousness of members and friends, as can be detected in language and deed.

- **Engage in community action on environmental issues**

It is perhaps fair to say that prior to our introspective viewing stimulated by the GS effort, if asked for our primary UU reference points for social and ethical issues, our responses would have been more global. Now, this congregation, adjacent to the Great Lakes and 20% of the world’s fresh water, is building rain barrels because we think about aquifer depletion and pollution. Our local view of extractive industries like fracking changed not only because we are on the western portion of the oil shale deposits, but because we educated ourselves about methane and climate change and injection wells and aquifers. Food insecurity was more likely to be associated with international news reports, but now we readily engage in evaluating environmental consequences of our own eating while expanding our engagement with the local food banks on this issue. As individual members and as a congregation we are connected with our heritage of social and environmental advocacy and engage with enthusiasm locally with groups ranging from the Farmers Market to the local Interfaith Alliance to our own Kent Social Services and our Kent Environmental Council. And, we work towards a greener church we also develop an expanding view our members’ homes and beyond.
- **Strengthen the connection between spiritual practice and Earth consciousness**

Spiritual practice and Earth consciousness has been visibly strengthened through all four of the action themes.

 - Services with meditations (musical, guided imagery, slides and commentary, story, short clips, individual congregant testimonials) and Celebrations such as *Dinners for the Earth*; and *Pancake Breakfast With Earth in Mind* where people celebrate, share, and learn from one another; Yearly services with congregants bringing in soil and water gathered from special places to be used for sacred observations (baptism, weddings, funerals, and other times), yearly flower services, as well as yearly spring services and picnic lunches celebrated at the local Plum Creek Park have been well attended.
 - Religious Education is, for us, an overtly embraced effort towards learning and acting on *Ministry for the Earth* ideas and other engaging curricula that helps children and their families live the 7th principle. We are more able to dream and act together to cultivate reverent spiritual practices that honor and provide stewardship for the Earth and promote unity in which spiritual practice is lived in song and deed that reflect understanding of how nature sustains life.

- Environmental Justice is now much expanded and demands our greater attention and effort, in part stimulated by the Green Sanctuary framework and in part stimulated by an ever expanding environment of challenges. We are seeing that it includes a growth in linking and collaborating with individuals and groups in projects and actions that show respect for and actions on behalf of the interdependent web of existence of which we are a part and belief in the inherent dignity and worth of every person. Work related to Climate Change and the worlds' most vulnerable people with groups such as the *Ohio Interfaith Power and Light*, and locally with the *Interfaith Alliance* are strong and growing. In a recent spring *Interfaith Alliance* session called in response to global atrocities, death, and social unrest, two young women, panelists from the Muslim faith, shared reflections and poetry from their hearts that opened most of our hearts and minds and conversations. Here, created in our small UUCK sanctuary, was sacred space that enabled members from several of the world's religions to share their thoughts and be heard. The session concluded with the formation an organic circle of those from the multiple faiths holding hands and singing together as a shared spiritual practice on behalf of life on earth.
-
- **Work to heal environmental injustice**
 As UUs we have paid much attention to injustice and harm and are now appreciating the role of healing, for us and for the earth, in dealing with the problems. This ongoing goal has been reached in ever extending phases, as the process continues to generate new and continuing challenges; we realize that the goal will never be "met" as in "finished" but it enables us to keep extending our reach into more inclusive and complex challenges. Our efforts to address food insecurity with food and with methods of partnering with others engaged in growing and distributing food, while at the same time working to insure that the soil and water that enable the food to grow are healthy and sustainable will continue into the foreseeable future. Our reach and knowledge and success build on one another as we work with others to address fundamentally wicked (as in complex and difficult to solve) problems. The Child Development Center and Portage County Master Gardener Volunteers, for example, are planning a networking lunch with local groups and agencies that are working toward more sustainable farming and produce distribution.

Program Evaluation (attach tracking tool if you wish)

- What do you believe has been the most important benefit your congregation has gained as a result of your participation in the Green Sanctuary Program?

Coherence and integration. Pulling together various green elements of our work into a more coherent and integrated whole has been highly beneficial in several ways, many noted in the *Outcomes* described in the four theme areas. This Green Sanctuary Application process has enabled us to make links both within our congregation (garden folks with landscape and building maintenance; fracking with sustainability and food issues) and deepen and expand some relationships outside our congregation (collaboration with Trinity Lutheran Church, Kent Social Services, First Unitarian Church of Cleveland, Portage County Master Gardener Volunteers, Kent State University Child Development Center, and potentially many more including: Edible Kent, Food not Lawns; City Repair and others on the drawing board for spring 2017).

Lenses: Organizational framework and Historical perspective. Being challenged to take a longer look enabled us to make connections to the past and to see our present work in light not only the past and present but also the future with all its environmental and social challenges. The GS framework helps us to shape our aspirations in light of what we say we want but also in light of the results that the environmental assessment suggests are called for. Greener living was and is advocated by almost all congregants, but the hard work of living our advocacy is more demanding than many might have knowingly signed on for. While an external energy audit was resisted, the internal audit produced both an important document with facts, figures, and recommendations, but importantly a better understanding of how the pieces of the audit fit together with the demands of the GS program guidelines. The historical perspective is inspiring and has fuelled a sense of pride and alignment with our current work.

- What has been the most difficult or challenging aspect of the program for your congregation to make progress on?

Getting a handle on what is entailed in living as a green sanctuary. Part of this may have been that we had a two part process – before we decided to stay where we are (physical building and location) and after that: *‘Ok, now we can do an energy audit – but it really doesn’t make sense to do one now because we are going to build a new building and renovate the old. We already know what we need.’* But, this was a requirement of the GS process. So, we drafted an in-house energy audit contingent and *did it.* And as we did this, along with other parts of the Environmental Assessment many things became apparent – not only with energy conservation in our two buildings, but as a campus with a longer term and more complex future to envision, support, and live into. We are in the process of implementing suggestions from the report. Many things have been done (holes filled in;), some suggestions are in the process of being implemented (new energy efficient door and windows soon; better using the programmable thermostats that we already have), and others are on the drawing board and evolving with plans for the new building (as earth friendly building materials as we can afford, provisions for solar energy, permaculture campus landscaping).

Money. The biggest challenges seem to be related to conflicting perspectives and perceived priorities, which can entail arguments over *Green or Money? Aesthetic or Practical?* When this happens, *Green and Efficient, Aesthetic and Practical*, seem far from possible. Money is an important consideration, the issue sometimes turns into short-term vs long-term costs; to taking a “life-cycle of the materials” perspective (how is the material produced? What are energy costs, short-term and long-term, including disposal, and costs to the earth), or a short term ‘*This is what it will cost NOW*’ perspective. When issues of money are compounded with issues of Time, listening to alternative perspectives can be challenging. Getting at the complexity of issues is difficult when positions are taken. And yet, we are often stronger for our thought provoking moments and the education that comes from exploring alternatives.

With a project as big and complex as deciding how we will be together as a congregation at this point in history with unprecedented change and challenge, and we are designing a new building, renovating an old one, and designing our campus, we are making remarkable progress.

Meetings/Time. While money and its relationship to time can be stoppers in discussion, first there has to be discussion. Having more than two or three people present for a meeting to discuss matters has, on occasion, been a challenge. Being a dynamic, vital and growing church with people and families at all ages along the life cycle, means many programs, opportunities, and at times competing commitments, with a finite amount of time and a calendar to schedule. Alternative methods of communication and getting things done have helped. (e.g. Instead of three people personing a booth at Social Hour—looped slides and one person work pretty well!)

- Have you been able to discern positive changes in your congregation’s culture as a result of the activities you accomplished? If so, what are they?

Yes. There are many discernable changes, among them: Food habits including the greening of social hour and other events in terms of diversity and nutritional value of foods offered and earth friendly products and processes used; water habits such as fewer plastic water bottles; meditation as part of our church life, growing awareness of climate change and resources, willingness to entertain more sustainable ways of living and relating to one another.

- What are your intentions/aspirations for continuing to live out your Green Sanctuary commitments?

Many (most) of our action projects are continuing. While we have completed projects and significant parts of longer-term projects in each of the four areas, there are also many important steps into the future that are on the drawing board. Continued planning, implementing, documenting and learning from our work on the new sustainable gardens, building, and programs; and making GS a part of our normal activity and thinking are on-going challenges that will take us into the foreseeable future. A small example: our church has been active in supporting the pipeline protests in North Dakota, and at the Dec 4 church service while addressing this issue with concern and prayer, we found that Rev. Melissa Carvill-Ziemer, now serving the UUA Minister’s Association, is at the protest.

Our intentions and aspirations to live our values have been supported by an active, committed congregation and by a minister who showed us what it means to live your values – who spoke those values in the language of action helping us to make a path that would continue beyond any one person or group.

- What on-going role do you expect your congregation will take in the wider community relative to environmental issues? How does your Green Sanctuary work affect your connection in the community?

As we continue with the Environmental Justice project of *Food for All* and clean water, the circle grows, deepening our partnerships and partnering with an expanding network of others on sustainability issues. With Portage County Master Gardeners and permaculture gardening with children and youth and community members, we play a heuristic role in our local community. Being a vital part of the community as an evolving green sanctuary with our campus and buildings and curriculum and outreach is the path we have chosen. As the early members of the church took leadership roles by living out loud their values and became stewards in their communities, we show signs of and expect to continue this tradition. Early members of this church created the foundation for the work that we continue – the Kent Environmental Council, Kent Natural Foods, and other prescient member supported community groups who, while connecting with the issues of their days and their communities, connected with the UUA and the larger world’s social and environmental issues; the peoples’ and the planet’s well being. Our Green Sanctuary work strengthens our work in both the local community and the global community – the web reverberates in all directions.

So far, at home, we have kept green issues (environmental and social) in mind as we make decisions about the design and construction of our buildings and campus, considerations about temporary housing and food, as well as a welcoming space inside and outside for community activities. The mutuality that is called for in the Environmental Justice theme and project takes us into mutuality and generative relationships in ways that are evolving and new to many of us. Understanding “helping” as a mutual process takes us into the natural world in more relational ways, bringing the first UU principle with the seventh principle into stronger relief. This juxtaposition of principles helps us to more clearly understand that Social and Environmental concerns are inextricably related – that without a home there is no need for equality, and without support for life, voice, and human, animal, and earth rights, there is no need for home. The earth will likely recover without the damage we to inflict. As E.O. Wilson and other more optimistic scientists suggest, we may still have a choice. We can choose to move against the earth-depleting equilibrium we have grown accustomed to. We can choose consciousness and action, and with these choose to be part of the change that is needed. That is what leads the UUCK congregation to seek to be a green sanctuary in a time that calls for nothing less than living into our aspirations as fragile and resilient strands in the deeply threatened web of all existence. *We expect to be a beacon linking with other beacons and to discover together, just what it means to live into our collective aspirations, helping to cultivate a future for life on a planet where our progeny will prosper because they are whole people who have learned how nature sustains life.*

Appendices

A. Environmental Justice

EJ: Local food related groups: CDC: Networking and making soil

CDC September 1, 2016

Plan:

Timeline:

Sept 1

Site observations & Plan

Sept 7 Pull the P garden up 8 -12noon

Sept 14 lasagna preparation and start mulching 8-12noon

September 17 Saturday—Green Apple Work Day (no 17 or 24th for Pamm)

September 21: complete lasagna mulching**

*October 22 plan *Sustainable gardening community Recyclable Brown Bag lunch*

*Can have workday (8:30-12:00) and then lunch. People could do both – work and eat – or just work or just eat (and share).

Invite:

Farmer's Market: Andrew

Edible Kent

Food not Lawns

Lynn G. (Terri)

Kent Environmental Council

Green Apple Day of Service

Soil and Water: Lynn Vogel (Pamm)

PCMGs (Master Gardeners)

Reviewed slides from CDC Ambassadors Spring Meeting 2016

Information: There is a permaculture gardens related display at the Muted Horn gallery in Cleveland (5713 Tillman Ave, Cleveland, OH 44102 – Sat Sept 4: 6-9pm)

Area (Cleveland) people using permaculture methods of gardening will have descriptions of their gardens at the exhibit.

Figure 9 CDCmaking soil!



Figure 10 CDC lasagna mulching



B. Worship and Celebration

W&C: *Historical look: Reflections on UUCK and the 7th principle Aug 2016*

Welcome to our continuing conversation . . .

As we stand in this, our 150th year as a congregation, we pause to glimpse into our past and to wonder at our extravagant good fortune in the natural world and the relationships that enable and nurture this magnificent life.

This year, we pause to explore a few of the great mysteries of life, of what informs our spiritual faith, as a church and as individuals. What are our roots, the foundations and the meaning of the UU 7th principle: *respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part?* What calls to us -- here -- today -- in the fall of 2016, in the Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent, Kent, OH, USA, planet Earth, Universe? In fact, *who* and *where* are “we”? And *where are we going?*

As you might have experienced a few months ago in a quick congregational time travel through 12.6 billion years – we are infants in the universe and on earth.

According to one theologian, the Rev Forrest Gilmore:

“This Land is Your Land is Not TRUE – We are part of nature; it is closer to say we are the earth’s children . . . Our seventh Principle, respect for the interdependent web of all existence, is a glorious statement . . . It is our response to the great dangers of both individualism and oppression. It is our solution to the seeming conflict between the individual and the group.

“Our seventh Principle may be our . . . way of coming to fully embrace something greater than ourselves. The interdependent web—expressed as the spirit of life, the ground of all being, the oneness of all existence, the community-forming power, the process of life, the creative force, even God—can help us develop . . . understanding of ourselves that we and our culture so desperately need. It is a source of meaning . . .”

The *web of life*? Environmental roots? What do Alexander Von Humboldt, Charles Darwin, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Martin Luther King, and John Muir have in common?

What about *Rachel Carson*, the *Rev Abigail Danforth*, the first woman minister of our Kent Church in 1889? *Bill Schultz*? The *Kent Environmental Council*? *Kent Natural Foods*? The *Rev Melissa Carvill Ziemer*? What an evolving heritage!

What is *Environmental Justice*, and what are the threads and stewardship projects of our congregation since 2009 when we committed to becoming a green sanctuary congregation?

Take a look! Explore and join in on these twelve action projects as they continue to evolve. Help us to explore and build on our rich heritage as we care for our living earth home and each other. . .

W&C Example of Posted and reviewed materials for Bulletin Board; Earth Day. . .and feedback



What are the goals of the Green Sanctuary program? (or: Why bother?)

- Build awareness of the significance and complexity of environmental issues
- Encourage personal lifestyle changes
- Engage in community action on environmental issues
- Strengthen the connection between spiritual practice and Earth consciousness
- Work to heal environmental injustice

How are we living the 7th UU Principle?

“Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.”

Did you know? Green Action Projects: 2009-2016 . . .

Worship and Celebration

- *Precious Water: Cultivating awareness and action*
- *Bringing Balance: Meditation and Memorial Gardens*
- *Services related to the 7th UU Principle & the 150 Year Celebration of UUCK: 2016*

Religious Education

- *Ministry for the Earth gardening and stewardship*
- *Environmental Justice Film Series*
- *Green Library: Resources and forums*

Environmental Justice

- *Cultivating a Local Community Environment with Food for All*

Sustainable Living

- *Cultivating Ecological Design – Permaculture Garden Campus*
- *The Greening of Social Hour*
- *Cultivating Awareness and Action: Refusing, Recycling, Re-using, and Composting; Electronics Recycling Review*
- *Reducing our carbon footprint in new and old buildings and campus renovations*

*What would you like to learn more about?
What are your thoughts, interests, ideas?*

GS Feedback: *Religious Education*

- 0. Not my cup of tea
- 1. Yes this is a good idea!
- 2. I'd like to be notified about this.
- 3. Like to participate!
- 4. I have an idea!

Name (optional):

GS Feedback: *Religious Education*

- 0. Not my cup of tea
- 1. Yes this is a good idea!
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- 3. Like to participate!
- 4. I have an idea!

Name (optional):

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Name (optional):

GS Feedback: *Religious Education*

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- 2. I'd like to be notified about this.
- 3. Like to participate!
- 4. I have an idea!

Name (optional):

C. Religious Education

RE: Hogwarts (Harry Potter School): examples of Green activity

Summer 2016	Transfigurations Class	Made yard art (flowers and bee waterers) from used dishes.
Summer 2016	Guest Lecture presentation	Bees! How to help them. What they do for us.
Summer 2014	Muggle Studies Class	Recycle used Electronics
Summer 2015	Perfect Film Assignment	Watch about floating island of plastics & the harm they are causing the Earth; what we can do.
Summer 2015	Battle the Plasilisk Class	Kids defeated the use of single use plastics by cleaning up plastics left behind by the Blasilisk (play on Basilisk from stories).
	Session experiment; a longitudinal study	Kids made 3 jars of garbage (organic, paper, plastics). Every year we examine them & note the changes /lack of change.
Every session	Herbology Class	Explores the wonderful ways we are connected to the Earth through plants.
Summer 2014	Owl Pellets Class	We dissected owl pellets & explored how owls eat & live. Life cycle awareness
Winter 2016	Handmade Totes	We made canvas reusable totes for kids; older kids learned sewing. Everyone got a re-useable bag.
Winter 2016	Care of magical creatures	Bunny rescue. Kids learned about unwanted bunnies & how to help them.

Slytherin has house cup and will nominate a water based project/charity awareness focus for winter 2017

Various Animal Charities have been sponsored including:

- Pawsabilities (Akron Humane Society)
- Roses Rescue
- Medina Rapton Society
- Happy Trails
- APL (Portage County)
- Clover Field Bunny Rescue
- Pet Pantry

Results include:

- Parents have commented to us that their children are standing up against using plastic bottles
- Recycled glass yard art volunteers are making more on their own & giving them as gifts to friends and family
- Several people have seen their bee waterers in use with our hot and very dry summer
- I see our canvas totes being used in church, at the library, at the farmer's market and back at Hogwarts.

D. Sustainable Living

This document comes from the UUCK Board of Trustees. Highlight (added) referred to below notes commitment to Environmental Justice as one of three priorities.

UUCK Budget Priorities 2017-2018 –

The Church Board has set budget priorities for 2017-2018 fiscal year as part of our new budget process that focuses our resources on fulfilling our mission, "**To inspire love, to seek justice, and to grow in community.**" The new by-laws define this process as starting with mission-driven priorities to be enacted by church staff, committees through the budget and programming. This is a new process and the Board has selected several priorities on which our church will focus throughout the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

- **Economic justice** - We believe in the inherent worth and dignity of every person and must seek economic justice for all people, in our church, in our community, and in the world. Advocating for economic justice requires education about inequities and those people who are forced to the sides of our economic system as well as recognizing our own privileges. Seeking justice also requires that we ensure fair compensation for our church staff, who have not received a raise or cost-of-living increase in years, despite their excellent service. We will work for economic justice inside and outside of the church.

- **Outreach to serve the wider community** - We work to grow a peaceful and free community, in our congregation and in society at large. Personal growth and congregational growth can be achieved through service, as our church seeks to live in right relationship with the community of which we are a part. We will recognize and use the amazing spiritual, volunteer, and practical resources our church can bring to solving the problems which face our community.

- **Environmental justice** - We are part of the interdependent web of all existence and live in a time of crisis and opportunity. While the catastrophic environmental destruction threatens our natural world and the most vulnerable human communities, we can make a difference through our individual and collective actions. We will demonstrate our love for the Earth by both avoiding environmental harm and building a new way.

Church committees planning to make budget requests for the 2017-2018 fiscal year should describe how their planned activities will focus on these priorities.