

# Application for Green Sanctuary Accreditation



Williamsburg Unitarian Universalists - February 2012



*Green Sanctuary*  
*Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations*  
*Congregational Stewardship Services*  
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## **Application for Green Sanctuary Accreditation**

### **Congregation Information**

Congregation Name	Williamsburg Unitarian Universalists
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Minister or Congregation Leader	The Reverend Jennifer Ryu



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The heart of our Williamsburg UU community lies in the Historic Triangle of colonial Virginia which is comprised of the City of Williamsburg, James City County, and York County. This area holds unparalleled historic significance in American history, uncommon natural beauty, and a racially and economically diverse population.

Although the roots of Unitarian Universalism in Williamsburg go back to colonial times, the present congregation of Williamsburg Unitarian Universalists began in 1987. Monthly potluck dinner discussions led to twice-monthly meetings at the Regional Public Library. On February 5, 1989, despite a treacherous ice storm, ninety-nine people signed the membership book as charter members, a UUA record at the time.

Over the past 22 years our congregation has grown to 263 voting members. That number expands to over 400 when non-pledging members, friends, and active college students are included. In 2011 our average Sunday attendance was 145 adults. This number decreased while our called minister was on sabbatical. Our Lifespan Faith Development programs serve 68 registered children and youth, with weekly average attendance of 19. The demographic is predominately Caucasian, well-educated, a bit on the older side, but that is changing as younger families have joined us. We have three full-time staff members (Minister, LFD Director, and Office Administrator). We employ a 1/3 time Music Director who directs the adult choir and a 1/3 time Pianist who also directs the children's choir. Also considered part of the minister's staff are about 25 volunteer members of the Leadership Team, and a professional bookkeeping service.

Our campus consists of a fifteen-year old sanctuary building and two small houses dating from the 1950s used for offices and classes. They are referred to as Fahs (used for classes and meetings) and Parker (primarily used for offices).

A major step toward having a church home occurred in May 1989, when we acquired seven acres of land at our present site on Ironbound Road. Our new congregation lacked funds for such a purchase, so a small group of congregants formed a partnership to purchase the land and lease it to the congregation. Most later donated their shares. In 1990, a "Home 95" planning committee began the process of planning and building a church. We completed the new building in October 1995.



The years 2002-2004 saw a period of inner turmoil. Following the departure of our first settled minister in July 2003, much of the congregation's energy was focused on internal development. The WUU Board requested assistance from the UUA. We were advised to seek an experienced interim minister for a two-year period to give us time to heal the divisions and call a new minister. It was actually three years (2003-2006) before a successful search resulted in our calling wife/husband co-ministers, Jennifer Ryu and Preston Moore. In July 2009, Reverend Jennifer Ryu was called to assume the full ministry upon Preston's retirement. Our first full-time Director of LFD was hired in 2008.

## Congregational Vote

Since the arrival of our co-ministers, social justice work has become much more intentional. We are reaching out to the community. At present the groups working under the social justice umbrella are the LGBTQ Outreach Committee, the Multicultural Awareness Process, the Green Sanctuary Task Force, and the newly organized Restorative Justice Study Group.

The mission of the Williamsburg Unitarian Universalists is to serve:

- Our Members and Friends by providing a welcoming, inclusive community to explore and encourage personal spiritual growth;
- Greater Williamsburg by promoting religious, racial, and social harmony;
- Liberal Religion by embodying Unitarian Universalist values within our congregation and in society at large;
- The Global Community by participating in transformative action to achieve a sustainable and humane world.

The Williamsburg Unitarian Universalist Covenant:

We promise:

- To respect ourselves and the inherent dignity of all human beings
- To support each other's search for truth
- To help each other grow in mind and spirit
- To teach ourselves and our children the value of religious thought and feeling
- To act responsibly toward the society in which we live
- To renew ourselves through shared educational, artistic, and spiritual experiences
- To care for each other
- To try to live morally and deepen our spiritual lives.



At the WUU Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 5, 2012, the congregation voted on a resolution to approve and strongly endorse the submittal of our application to the UUA for certification as a Green Sanctuary Congregation. The resolution included a pledge to continue the journey toward becoming a congregation in which the environmental impact of our individual and group actions are considered in every aspect of our individual and congregational lives.

A RESOLUTION OF APPROVAL AND ENDORSEMENT\*  
for  
Application to the UUA for Green Sanctuary Accreditation  
by the Congregation of Williamsburg Unitarian Universalists

Whereas, the [Green Sanctuary](#) Program offered by the Unitarian Universalist Association offers a path for congregational study and reflection and a call to individual and collective actions in response to environmental challenges, and

Whereas, this program reflects UUA Principles, especially, the seventh—Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part, and

Whereas, as Williamsburg Unitarian Universalists, we are holders of the flame of generations past in order to preserve a sustainable future for those who come after us, and

Whereas, this congregation has been guided by the Green Sanctuary Task Force through eighteen months of candidacy including fifteen action projects,

Therefore, be it resolved, that we, the congregation of the Williamsburg Unitarian Universalists, approve and strongly endorse the submittal of our application to the Unitarian Universalist Association for accreditation as a Green Sanctuary Congregation.

Let it be further resolved, that we pledge to continue on the journey towards becoming a place where, as individuals, we consider our environmental impact in every action, resulting in a collective awareness reflected in our WUU policy and in every area of congregational life; and towards becoming a congregation whose every decision carries an understanding of our spiritual connection with the Earth and all living things, demonstrated through worship and celebration, religious education, environmental justice and sustainable living. As we travel this journey, we will in turn grow deeper spiritual connections with each other, in our congregation and in the wider community.

**\* On February 5, 2012, the Williamsburg Unitarian Universalists (WUU) held their 2012 annual meeting. During this meeting, the WUU Congregation approved by unanimous vote the resolution to apply to the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) for the accreditation of WUU as a Green Sanctuary congregation.**

**Robert T. Vinson  
Secretary and Board Member  
Williamsburg Unitarian Universalist Congregation**

Note - Almost half the voting membership attended this meeting, well over the required quorum.



## WORSHIP AND CELEBRATION



Project Title: **THE 7TH PRINCIPLE IN WORSHIP**

Project Description and Action:

The purpose of this project was to weave into our worship services elements of the Seventh Principle; incorporate mindfulness of our spiritual responsibility to not only live in harmony with, but also to promote active stewardship of, the Earth; honor earth-centered religious ceremonies and practices around the changes of seasons.

The goal was a minimum of two services each year devoted to environmental themes. At these services and throughout the year, Seventh Principle themes were to be incorporated into worship through readings, skits, choir anthems, hymns, art, dance, meditations and the Story for All Ages.

In 2009/2010 the two services with earth related themes were:

*September 20, 2009: "Living in Harmony with the Earth" by Rev. Jennifer Ryu*

- Story - "Gecko Cannot Sleep"
- Skit: "Avoiding the Final" based on "Final Exam" by Doug Stewart (conversation between St. Peter and Mother Earth with Roger Baldwin and Nan Hart)
- "Green Sanctuary Reflection" given by Donna Stanford, Chair, Green Sanctuary Task Force
- Hymns - "For the Beauty of the Earth" and "Blue Boat Home"
- Offertory - "Circle of Life" by Elton John



*April 18, 2010: "Green Sanctuary Service: Moving from Assessment to Action"*

Members of the Green Sanctuary Task Force led this service.

- Speaker: Roger Baldwin
- Worship Associate: Nan Hart
- Brief remarks by Ann Tetrault, "About Earth Day" and Donna Stanford, "About Green Sanctuary"
- Story for All Ages told by Gillian Dawson
- Prelude - "Earth Moves in a Mysterious Way" by Laurie Lewis, sung by Fran Metzger
- Hymns - "Morning Has Broken," "In the Branches of the Forest," and "Earth was Given as a Garden"
- Choir Anthem - "Prayer of Earth and Sky"
- Meditation by Wendell Berry #483
- Meditation in Music - "Desert Sunset" performed by musicians of the congregation
- Offering music - "Blood of the Ancients/Spirit of the Earth" by J.G. Russell

## Completion of Action Plan - Worship and Celebration

In addition to these services, the theme of nature and the environment was included in many different ways. Sometimes an entire service was devoted to these themes while in other services, elements of these themes were present. Examples of services with earth related themes, as well as earth-related elements, are listed below along with a link to each:

December 20, 2009: ["The Growing Light, a Winter Solstice Service"](#) by Rev. Jennifer Ryu

April 11, 2010: ["I am What I Eat: The Morality of Food"](#) by Rev. Jennifer Ryu



August 8, 2010: "Green Living, Green Dying" by Rev. Alane Miles

2010 Green Sanctuary service:

November 14, 2010: ["Earth as God's Body"](#)- by Rev. Jennifer Ryu

Worship Associate: Nan Hart

Storyteller: Gillian Dawson

Appalachian Music Ensemble from the College of William & Mary

December 19, 2010: ["Winter Solstice - Reflections on the Season"](#) by Rev. Jennifer





## Completion of Action Plan - Worship and Celebration

2011 Green Sanctuary services:

April 10, 2011: "[Healing the Gulf](#)" by Laura Wallace (also on mountaintop removal)



April 17, 2011: "[Earth Day: Remembering Who We Are](#)" by Rev. Jennifer & Green Sanctuary

May 1, 2011: "Beltane/May Day" by Rev. Jennifer

June 19, 2011: "Benediction and Flower Communion" by Rev. Jennifer Ryu



July 17, 2011: "[When UUs and Paganism Came Together](#)" by Jerrie Hildebrand

October 23, 2011: "[Pagan Spirit & Nature Circles](#)" by Selena Fox

October 30, 2011: "[Samhain Service](#)" by David Doersch

Timeline for Completion:

We officially started our Green Sanctuary projects in September of 2009, and they continue to this day.

Outcomes:

We are building a depth of connection to the earth and to each other through worship experiences that weave in the spoken word, the medium of song and music and poetry and beautiful prose and humor.

Our message of caring for the earth and its creatures is being proclaimed loud and clear in our services. We owe much to the support of our minister.

Lead: Nan Hart



Project Title: **EARTH DAY CELEBRATIONS**

Project Description and Action:

The purpose of Earth Day Celebrations is to celebrate and honor the Earth on the weekend nearest the actual date of Earth Day, April 22. We've been celebrating Earth Day for the past few years. In 2009 our celebration was centered around activity centers. Thirteen participants presented projects on various earth related subjects from art for kids using recycled materials to a frame of live bees, plant and local food sources.

In 2010 the 40th Anniversary of Earth Day, a multi-age group of over forty people came out to help clean the roadside, have lunch together, participate in earth-friendly and earth-honoring craft projects. We closed with a worship service led by our minister, Jennifer Ryu. The month of April, 2010, was devoted to a Celebration of the Earth through the Arts at WUU.

The past year's celebration took place on April 16, 2011, and included community service through the Adopt-a-Highway cleanup morning, along with an on-campus activity for children too young to participate in the roadside cleanup. These activities were followed by an Earth-friendly lunch for volunteers and participants.

Timeline for Completion:

Our first Earth Day Celebration took place in April, 2009. Each year we've scheduled the celebrations as close to the actual April 22 date as possible. Planning begins several months in advance. The past year's planning began in November, 2010 and ended with the event on Saturday, April 16, 2011.



Outcomes:

- Our first celebration three years ago was a spectacular success. The supper, activity centers, and drumming group drew over 80 people of all ages and many volunteer helpers.



## Completion of Action Plan - Worship and Celebration

- The following year a day-long activity also drew a large number of participants. People dropped in and out throughout the day. The length of the day was physically exhausting for volunteers although it provided opportunities for members of the congregation to attend activities which interested them most.



- In 2011, despite the threat of severe weather (some places in our area suffered tornado devastation that day), a successful small-scale event was held from 10 am to 12 with an earth-friendly lunch at noon. The day's focus was on roadside clean up as part of our Adopt-A-Highway program. Although the weather and a number of competing and worthwhile community activities reduced the number of participants last year, the Earth Day Celebration was still considered a success. Seven adults gathered at 10 am that day to receive safety instructions, don their bright orange safety vests, and collect their big orange trash bags before setting out along Ironbound Road to pick up litter and trash. Four adults were on hand to work with younger children (ages 12 to 2). The ages of the children determined the activities that day: measuring tree size by the number of children required to hug it and assisting in readying the WUU vegetable garden for planting.



- Earth Day falls on a Sunday in 2012. Due to scheduling conflicts, the Green Sanctuary Task Force will be involved in planning the worship on the Sunday previous to actual Earth Day. A celebration will follow that service.

Lead: Donna Stanford

## Completion of Action Plan - Worship and Celebration



### Project Title: **CELEBRATING THE EARTH THROUGH ART**

#### Project Description and Action:

To promote environmental appreciation, foster creative expression, and encourage deeper spiritual reflection, a month-long art exhibit has been held in our Sanctuary for the past two years during the month of April. Over twenty artists from our congregation have participated. In April, 2011 the focus was on the visual arts, the theme being "The Beauty and Diversity Found in Nature." Our Sanctuary came alive with beautiful nature-inspired works of art.

This effort was led by a member of the Green Sanctuary Task Force but other hands and eyes helped pull the event together. The first challenge was the installation of a permanent wooden picture rail on each side of the Sanctuary. Once permission was secured from our minister and the aesthetics committee, our physical plant chair and his committee did the actual installation and painting of the rail. The result was a most attractive and unobtrusive wooden rail which makes the hanging and arranging of the art work much easier and more efficient. The members of WUU's Monday Morning Creative Artist group, of which the GS leader is a member, covered the expense of the picture rail and spent most of one day arranging and hanging the exhibit.



An opening reception was held the Friday before Sunday's official unveiling. This was a time to meet the artists and view their work. Following the reception a film was shown with a theme very appropriate for an evening of art. "Rivers and Tides" was a narrated documentary by Scottish environmental artist, Andy Goldsworthy. His beautiful sculptures, made entirely in and of nature, have a spiritual quality. The film was very much enjoyed and appreciated by those present.

#### Timeline for Completion:

- Work on securing the picture rail began in November, 2010; it was installed four months later.
- In January, 2011, a waiver releasing the church of responsibility for any damage to or loss of art work was written with advice from an attorney in our congregation. The waiver was to be signed by all participants in the exhibit.



## Completion of Action Plan - Worship and Celebration

- Throughout February, announcements were made in the service, monthly newsletter, weekly Spiral, the web, and bulletin board.
- March 13 was the deadline for waivers to be returned by artists.
- March 28 the exhibit was hung.
- April 1 was the reception and film.

### Outcomes:

For the artists this was an outlet for sharing their creativity and artistic response to the natural world. For the congregation it was a chance to enjoy, reflect, appreciate and be spiritually uplifted by the works on display in the Sanctuary. Closer bonds were created between all who were involved in the production of this event. The response from the congregation has been extremely positive, with requests from many to continue this annually. In fact, our minister has asked that the exhibit be extended for another month in 2012!

Lead: Donna Stanford



*The installation, the reception, the exhibit...*



## LIFESPAN FAITH DEVELOPMENT



Project Title: **GREEN DYING AND MUCH MORE**

Project Description and Action:

Dying Green and MUCH More' is a four-part seminar developed by two members of the Green Sanctuary Task Force and the Director of Lifespan Faith Development. The goal of the series is to acquaint people with options as they prepare for their own deaths. Each two-hour segment reflects on a distinct phase of this preparation. Part One: Getting legal affairs in order; Part Two: How to have the care one wants when unable to make one's own decisions; Part

Three: Environmentally sound death and body disposal; and Part Four: Is there an afterlife?

This series was first offered on the first four Sunday afternoons of October 2010. Each two-hour session was held in the sanctuary, our facility accommodating easy reconfiguration of chairs and speaker needs. Being in our spiritual center, with a lit chalice, was an important element.

The congregation was notified through various congregational media from September through the end of the series; an article was placed in the Virginia Gazette, Williamsburg's local newspaper, along with a weekly notice in its community Calendar of the Week, inviting the outside community; and District UU congregations were sent special invitations. Approximately 35 people registered or attended as drop-ins. The average attendance was 20-25, primarily those of older generations and primarily WUU congregants.

Experts in the subject of each session presented appropriate information and then opened their session for discussion. A local estate planning lawyer and our own Endowment Committee representatives provided options for disposal of personal property and assets. Three professional care providers: a physician, the Director of Ethics and Palliative Care for the local hospital system, and the Director of Clinical Services for Hospice House Williamsburg focused on medical issues and last-days care. Session three's topic of bodily remains disposal was address by a UU minister from nearby Richmond who has significant experience and interest in hospice care and green endings, the CEO of a Richmond/Williamsburg-based funeral service, and a WUU member who leads Great Endings, a chapter of the Final Exit Network. To close the series, WUU's pastor helped the attendees explore concepts of after-life. The three planning team members served as session moderators. Other Green Sanctuary Task Force members assisted with greeting and registering participants, preparing and serving mid-session refreshments, and the setting up and taking down of room arrangement.



## Completion of Action Plan - Lifespan Faith Development

### Timeline for Completion:

This series was first presented in October 2010. It is expected to be repeated every two or three years.

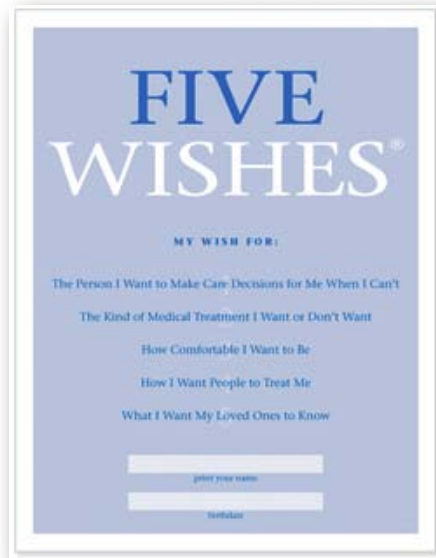
### Outcomes:

Each participant left with a copy of "Five Wishes" and its accompanying guide, "Next Steps." These materials suggest ways to talk with family and doctors about end-of-life decisions, needs and wants. When properly signed, "Five Wishes" is considered a legal document; it expands upon the Living Will requests. Participants were also given estate planning guides, with the option to talk one-on-one with the lawyer. Websites for gathering more information about green burial were shared. People have become more aware of the care-giving resources available locally.

Many attendees have made specific plans for their life-endings. New thinking and interpersonal discussions on all the topics covered has taken place. A new sign has appeared at the funeral home saying it is now also a crematorium. Talk has increased about scattering ashes in our church's memorial garden.



Leads: Roger Baldwin, Margaret Sequiera (LFD Director), Lola Warren





Project Title: **COMMUNICATION AND RESOURCES**

Project Description and Action:

The purpose of this project is to make environmentally-related resources available to the congregation through a multi-media approach. These resources will help strengthen our spiritual connection with the Earth and all living things and provide insight and tools so that we can be better stewards of our environment.

The multi-media approach involves:

- A shelf of resources in our WUU Library which includes books for children and adults, DVDs, energy meters, magazines and other hard copy materials for loan.
- An online [Environmental Resource Center](#) with links to:
  - resources related to Ethical Eating, including local farm markets and availability of organic products and foods
  - environment, energy, sustainability, and justice resources
  - searchable list of related materials in the WUU Library
  - searchable list of related sermons from the WUU Sermon Library
- In 2010/11 a monthly [Green Sanctuary Update](#) was sent electronically to the WUU Leadership Team and interested members of the congregation (a 60 person list), with a few hard copies available in the Narthex.
- Environmentally themed articles were included in the weekly Spiral and monthly WUU Newsletter.
- From time to time articles and photos were sent and published in our local newspaper, The Virginia Gazette. A comprehensive article about the WUU Green Sanctuary Program appeared in the Gazette's *Easy Being Green* column in April, 2011. →
- Green Sanctuary notices and information were placed on the shared Social Justice bulletin board and table in the Narthex.
- On several occasions oral announcements were made in Sunday services.
- January 30, 2011 - an oral/visual report was presented to the congregation with thirteen people using visual aids representing the projects underway.

Timeline for Completion: We began these actions in the summer of 2010 and have continued them through the present.



## Completion of Action Plan - Lifespan Faith Development



Outcomes: In addition to posting Green Sanctuary information on the Social Justice bulletin board and display table in the Narthex, a resource shelf in the library contains environmental materials and books. At present the church library is in need of organization to enable congregants to make the best use of its resources.

The online resources center has been under construction for many months and is now active. In addition to the resources listed above, we hope to add the online version of the *Green Sanctuary Update* so that this can be accessed through a link in the weekly Spiral and other media.

We plan to continue all the means of information dissemination listed above, while constantly working to improve communication with the congregation on environmental issues.

Leads: Gillian Dawson, Nan Hart, Donna Stanford, Lola Warren, David Wilcox



*Sharing action plan progress with the congregation in January 2011...*

## Completion of Action Plan - Lifespan Faith Development



Project Title: 2010 CHILDREN'S PROJECT,  
"CELEBRATING RAINFORESTS"

### Project Description and Action:

For ten weeks during the summer of 2010 the children (ages 5 through middle school) gathered in Fahs House on the WUU campus to celebrate the planet's rainforests. Activities were designed to help the children appreciate the value of rainforests and their important place in the ecosystem. It offered children a variety of ways to help make a connection to the Earth and elicited and suggested ways they could make a

difference. The curriculum used was "Celebrating Rainforests" by Tirrell H. Kimball.

In learning about rainforests the children were actively engaged more directly in understanding the meaning of our UU Seventh Principle.

### Timeline for Completion:

The program began in late June and ran through August, 2010.

### Outcomes:

"Celebrating Rainforests" was very popular with the students and teachers. The large room in which the class met was transformed into a mini rainforest with tropical plants and birds (most were created by the students). A variety of activities engaged the children in exploring ways to protect the rainforests and help the environment. Respect for the interdependent web of all existence as well as honoring and caring for the Earth were themes reinforced throughout the summer.

The children made T-shirts with a rainforest theme. A poster was created with colorful paper cutouts of all the children's hands which stated, "We Are Friends of the Earth." The poster was used at several Green Sanctuary events throughout the year. The children also received Green Sanctuary Buttons.

Snacks were tied to the rainforest theme as were stories, games and songs.

Lead: Margaret Sequeira, Director of Lifespan Faith Development







Project Title: ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTARY FILM SERIES

Project Description and Action:

Since 2007 a series of documentary films related to the environment has been shown four times throughout each church year. Since WUU became involved in Green Sanctuary candidacy, films on topics related to the four focus areas of Green Sanctuary have been incorporated in the series. This series has especially focused on educating, raising awareness, and promoting sustainable living and environmental justice in our congregation. Some of the films shown were *Kilowatt Ours*, *A Convenient Truth: Urban Solutions from Curitiba, Brazil*, *The End of Suburbia*, and *Trashed*. These film nights included a pre-film supper and were well attended.

- In October, 2009, a potluck of "ethical" foods was enjoyed as part of an *Ethical Eating Food Fair* which drew over 60 attendees. The evening highlights included a number of information booths on the topic of Ethical Eating along with a brief film, *The True Cost of Food*.



- In February, 2010, a supper ("Beans & Rice from Around the World") was held before viewing *Food, Inc.* Also included that evening was a short, humorous PowerPoint featuring WUUs illustrating a dozen or so *Food Rules*, from the book by Michael Pollan.

- In October, 2010, two short segments of the UUA film *Renewal* were shown at an evening event which started off with a Middle Eastern type dinner. The segments were, "Food for Faith," and "Ancient Roots." A discussion took place following the film.



- In December the Green Sanctuary Task Force sponsored an evening multi-generational event which featured a supper, screening of "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," and a craft table where all ages could make gifts and decorations using natural or recycled materials.

- In February, 2011, an evening program for adults was held. Following a light supper, an expert from Virginia Home Performance gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding the energy audit performed on the three WUU buildings the past December. Several UUs who had arranged for home energy audits with this company shared their experiences. A question/answer period followed.



- In April, as a kick-off to the Green Sanctuary "Celebration of the Earth Through Art," a reception and viewing of the

## Completion of Action Plan - Lifespan Faith Development

art exhibit was held in the evening. Light refreshments and non-alcoholic beverages were served as folks viewed the exhibit. After about an hour, a film was shown. "Rivers and Tides," about Scottish artist/environmentalist Andy Goldsworthy depicted the magical, almost spiritual, relationship between art and nature. This is a visually beautiful film which fit most appropriately with the theme of the exhibit, "The Beauty and Diversity Found in Nature."



### Timeline for Completion:

In 2010-2011, planning for the film/event series began in August, and was successfully completed in April.

### Outcomes:

This year's film series followed three previous successful series from 2007. This year's events were a bit more varied in nature. The response to the October films was very positive with good discussion afterwards. The Middle Eastern themed supper was provided by friends of the GS Task Force with a donation basket provided to help cover food costs. Approximately twenty people attended.

December's Soup and Sandwiches Supper followed by a showing of the "Grinch" drew about 30 people of all ages. After the film, some people left, but those remaining, especially the children but not only the children, had a great time making gifts and decorations from recycled and natural materials. Even though the Swap Table didn't prove as successful, there were many requests for another such event! (See "WUU Yule Sing Family Event" which follows.)

In February it was decided that instead of a documentary film night, we would provide a light supper and invite those interested in learning about our church energy audit (which took place the previous December) to hear someone from the audit company explain the audit process and the results. We also asked a few members who had participated in home energy audits to share their experiences. We ended with a Q & A session. Nearly forty people attended. As a result of our energy audit project, 19 WUU households participated in the home audits with several of these having energy improvements made in their homes.

Approximately 45-50 people turned out for the April 1 reception and film. It will be a challenge to find an equally relevant film for next year's event.

It's hoped that the environmental film series continues. Whether the number of events remains the same, is yet to be determined. Although the previous environmental group began the idea of a film series four years ago, the concept has now caught on with other WUU groups and committees. There is a saturation point for the congregation. Eventually, the Green Sanctuary group will have to make an assessment to determine how to proceed.

Lead: Donna Stanford



## Completion of Action Plan - Lifespan Faith Development



Project Title: **2011 WUU YULE SING FAMILY EVENT**

Project Description and Action:

As an outgrowth of the previous year's Green Sanctuary Holiday Family Activity, the 2011 WUU Yule Sing Event broadened in scope as Green Sanctuary teamed up with Lifespan Faith Development and the Monday Morning Creative Artists' group to sponsor a multi-generational activity for our WUU family.

- A taco supper with a dessert potluck and a viewing of "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" was followed by various activities for all ages.
- A tree trimming activity to involve children in creating holiday decorations for the Sanctuary tree.
- A craft table for making holiday gifts and decorations from natural and recycled materials.
- A "Secret Holiday Shop" where young children could "shop" in secret for gifts for parents and other loved ones. The "ticket" to the shop was the donation of a non-perishable food item for our local food bank. Items to "buy" were gently or never-used donations from congregants.
- Christmas caroling for everyone accompanied by our WUU pianist.
- A visit from Santa made the evening complete!



Timeline: The idea for collaboration on this project began in 2010. More definitive plans were made in the fall of 2011 and culminated with the event on December 9, 2011.

Outcomes: The first joint effort by three different WUU groups resulted in a hugely successful multi-generational experience for nearly ninety WUUs. The event was made possible with the help of over thirty adult volunteers. The supper hour allowed time for the generations to socialize. While tree trimming and craft making were popular as always, a highlight for many children was a visit to the Secret Gift Shop. The children helped wrap, box or bag their selections. This gave such a feeling of delight and satisfaction to the little ones. The gift shop served three purposes: it provided a wonderful array of items from which the children could choose; it served as an outlet for adults to recycle items no longer needed or used; it encouraged the children to think of others by being asked to contribute a non-perishable item for FISH--the local community food distribution center.



As a result of the night's activities, the Sanctuary tree was resplendent with hand-made decorations created by children working with adults. Many gifts were made from natural and recycled materials. The secret gift shop was a success and Santa's visit was joyously

## Completion of Action Plan - Lifespan Faith Development

welcomed. The evening concluded with carols around the piano. In the spirit of the Holiday Season, the generations had an opportunity to mix and mingle, which proved enjoyable for everyone!



In evaluating the outcome of this project, those involved were asked to consider the positives as well as ways to refine the structure for future events. Certain things were clear:

- Early planning and promotion is essential
- Better use of space is required
- Adequate volunteer help must be secured in advance
- Communication with volunteers before the event will help the evening run even more smoothly.
- The secret gift shop for children and the green gift making activity were welcome additions to the Yule Sing event and have much future potential as a way for our congregation to broaden this project beyond our walls and into the community by connecting with others in need of support and encouragement.

Leads: Margaret Sequeira and Donna Stanford



## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Project Title: **COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE (CSA)**

### Project Description and Action:

WUU has participated in the CSA program for the second year where shares were purchased by WUU congregants from KelRae Farms in Toano, Virginia, a few miles to the west of Williamsburg. This is a thirteen-week program. Each week baskets of produce were picked up from the farm by one of our CSA members and delivered to WUU in the late afternoon for pickup by the participants.

As part of our environmental justice initiative, each WUU shareholder contributed a portion of the produce to Grove Christian Community Outreach Center. The Center is located in a small community of mostly low-income minority residents. Once a week, the center receives donations from area markets that are distributed to those in need in the Grove community.

The CSA program has averaged 17 participating WUU families and 38 bushels of fresh vegetables were donated to Grove, a portion of the produce came from the participating families and the remainder was donated directly from KelRae Farm, through us. CSA families have shared the program with other WUU families by sharing recipes and fresh produce when the participating families were out of town. The total share investment in this program is close to \$10,000 thus helping KelRae Farms to have a guaranteed income flow for their CSA program. For WUU's 2011 annual auction, KelRae Farms donated two offerings for reduced share purchase for the 2012 CSA season.



### Timeline for Completion:

The program started in June, 2010 and continued through August, 2011 - thirteen weeks each year with follow-up options to harvest the fall crop.



### Outcomes:

The most obvious outcome of this project was that those involved received fresh, locally produced fruits and vegetables all summer long. WUU donations to Grove Christian Community Center were among the few fresh food contributions the Center received.

Those who were involved in the CSA project were often challenged to learn more about some of the vegetables

## Completion of Action Plan - Environmental Justice

we received in our baskets. We shared recipes and tried new things. A mutual appreciation for the produce was evident. The CSA Program was one aspect of our effort to eat ethically.

Our challenge in 2012 is to find leaders willing to continue this project and to increase participation in the CSA program. Our goal next year is 25 participating WUU families.

Leads: Les Solomon (2010) Charles and Trena Tankersley (2011)



*Enjoying and sharing locally grown produce...*





## Completion of Action Plan - Environmental Justice

Project Title: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE - RACE AND PLACE

### Project Description and Action:

This project was started to examine the linkages between race and class and the physical environment in which certain segments of the population - notably, minorities and the underprivileged - reside. A working definition of Environmental Justice was formed and an Internet search found a wealth of relevant material on EJ and Environmental Racism. The project leader also consulted local university sources, the University of Virginia's Institute of Environmental Negotiations, the Unitarian Universalist Association, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, among others. A search for potential cases of environmental inequities in our local community uncovered little evidence (rather surprisingly) of such in recent decades. As a result, the original intent of this project - to present local case studies of racism in a forum setting - shifted to one of public education on the topic. A publicized forum in October 2011 attracted an audience of 22. The project leader introduced the topic and its relationship to UUism's Seventh Principle. The director of environmental resources for our local county explained in detail many local and state programs that not only safeguard the environment but also ward off attempts to violate the principles of Environmental Justice. The event was well received.

### Timeline for Completion:

- December 2010: Completed basic literature research.
- May 2011: Completed consultation with subject matter experts.
- Fall 2011: Conducted public forum - "Environmental Justice 101"

### Outcomes:

- Raised the level of consciousness and knowledge of Environmental Justice within the congregation and the community.
- Increased the awareness in the community that our congregation is interested and involved in things environmental.
- Laid a foundation for planning follow-on educational events focusing on known examples of environmental racism in our state (e.g., mountain-top mining, new coal plant, uranium mining).

Lead: Roger Baldwin

## SUSTAINABLE LIVING



Project Title: **COME GARDEN!**

Project Description and Action:

A community garden for children and adults of WUU. Ten 4 ft x 8 ft raised beds were set up in a disused section of a fenced-in play area. Soil for the beds was mixed following the formula advocated by Mel Bartholomew in his book, "Square Foot Gardening." We followed his intensive planting technique. Participants met on Saturday mornings for one to two hours to weed, cultivate, plant and harvest. Produce was shared between gardeners and the congregation. A watering schedule was arranged to assure that plants had sufficient soil water.

The present "Come Garden" project has evolved from the *Multi-age Garden Project* and the *Community Garden Project* which were mentioned as two separate action projects in our 2010 candidacy application. Although a small multi-age group participated, the children enjoyed helping prepare the soil, weed, and learn about composting--not to mention the favorite activity, picking the ripe vegetables!

Timeline for Completion:

The project was run over two growing seasons, 2010 and 2011, from mid March until the first frost of the fall, which occurs in mid October.

Outcomes:

The project drew an average of eight steady participants who shared the work of gardening and watering. A number of children participated with their parents. Everyone gained a better understanding of vegetable and flower gardening, from seed to harvest; of how the changing seasons affect living things; and of our relationship to nature as expressed in our Seventh Principal. We had fun with the project and enjoyed each other's company.



In 2012 we are considering inviting WUU families or individuals to take responsibility for their own gardens on our WUU campus. In addition, we have been contacted by the Jewish Temple in our community to possibly join with them in a future community garden venture. The discussion to date has been very general but with the idea of involving the community beyond our congregations to participate in a garden project. The goal would be to educate and inspire those involved to learn more about gardening and experience



## *Completion of Action Plan - Sustainable Living*

first hand the wonder of growing some of the foods we eat. There are all sorts of directions this might take. Ethical eating as related to environmental justice would be a worthy goal of such a project.

Lead: Wayne Moyer



*Garden preparation, planting, and harvest...*



Project Title: **RECYCLE & REUSE ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES**

Project Description and Action:

Our goal was to educate ourselves and the congregation as to what products can be recycled and how to do it, to find and support businesses and/or non-profits, preferably local, that would take our collected recyclables, and to set up a recycling area on the church grounds for household items that were not accepted by the county-supported recycling program.

We began our effort by building awareness and educating through WUU publications. Articles were published in the monthly WUU newsletter (ex: May 2010, [What Would The Buddha Recycle?](#)), weekly Spiral, and monthly Green Sanctuary Update. Some months we focused on specific items such as batteries, the harm they were doing, and how to properly dispose of them.

Timeline for Completion:

The project began around March 2010 and is ongoing.

Outcomes:

A Recycling Committee was formed of interested folks who had not been involved with Green Sanctuary up to that time. In the spring of 2010, we set up large green bins by the church entrance, brought in sample items, and began to engage people in conversation about recycling plastics. (Many of them were not aware of what was already available through the county.) We encouraged people to bring in and separate their plastics; it was an on-going education for all. We moved our drop-off point to the back of the church and purchased large black trash cans. We had a sign made on proper disposal and posted it on the wall, and painted numbers on the trash cans, correlating with the plastics. We even separated the #5 plastics and took them to Richmond, Virginia, about 50 miles away, to a Whole Foods Market. (Certain products can be made only from #5 plastic. Whole Foods was donating this grade plastic to a company which used the recycled #5.) Since then, we've located a local business (Colonial Williamsburg) that willingly accepted our plastics.



The recycling of plastics # 1-7 has been a tremendous success. We collect between three to five 39-gallon bags of plastics each week. We depend on volunteers which limits what we can realistically do. Some of our initial goals included collecting different items each month, (such as small electronics, audio-visual media, sneakers, wine bottle corks, batteries) and finding a recipient for them. We have collected all of these items except for the sneakers, but have yet to find a business to accept some of them. We did collect six large boxes full of VCR tapes, CDs, DVDs, cassette tapes, and sent them to a non-profit business in Missouri.

## Completion of Action Plan - Sustainable Living



Members of the congregation have said that they are much more aware of how much they were throwing away before they began to recycle. Their commitment is demonstrated by the overflowing bins on Sundays. Visitors have commented that they had no idea so many things could be recycled and have returned to their hometowns intent on recycling more.

Lead: Nan Hart



*Other ways of Recycling and Reusing...*





Project Title: **RIDESHARE**

Project Description and Action:

The RideShare, carpool program had several goals:

- Encourage members and friends to participate in a personal way in a specific environmental project that has tangible results.
- Educate everyone in the meaning of “carbon footprint” and a practical way of reducing it.
- Reduce road congestion, fuel use, pollution and church parking lot overcrowding.
- Promote more social interaction – get to know WUU

neighbors - and enhance a sense of community (not really an environmental by-product, but highly desirable nevertheless).

User-friendly “cluster” listings of potential carpoolers were developed using a GIS program and transmitted to each congregant, with introductory information and encouragement to make individual arrangements with others in their cluster. A display map was prepared showing residential locations and potential clusters. Periodic reminders/prompts are published in congregational media.

Timeline for Completion:

- Methodology development completed in fall 2010.
- Project “went live” December 2010, with distribution of “cluster” lists.
- This is an on-going project requiring periodic maintenance and promotion.

Outcomes:

- General program acceptance as indicated by anecdotal reports from congregants.
- Somewhat reduced parking lot congestion, fuel use, etc.
- A developed and demonstrated process including software to support.

Lead: Roger Baldwin



*New bike rack installed...*





## Completion of Action Plan - Sustainable Living



Project Title: **ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY**

Project Description and Action:

Inspired by a highway cleanup activity during Earth Day 2010, WUU registered with the Virginia Department of Transportation Adopt-a-Highway Program, committing to four cleanups each year of one-mile of roadside fronting the church campus.

This project was undertaken to :

- Involve a broad cross section of the congregation in a service activity program that would improve the environmental quality of the community.
- Encourage youth to join a multi-generational environmental endeavor.
- Set an example of environmental stewardship with community visibility.

Timetable for Completion:

- August 2010 – Registered program with state officials
- September 2010 – Began recruiting cleanup team
- Spring 2011 – Started conducting roadside cleanup in accordance with requirements of the state program

This is a continuing project, with a three year commitment to the state.

Outcomes:

- A total of 30 adults and youth have participated in the three roadside cleanup events, enhancing their spirit of community and teamwork.
- One mile of previously untended roadside is being periodically cleaned, adding to the environmental quality of the community.
- Two roadside signs (permanent for three years) tell motorists that WUU members are practicing good stewardship of the environment.

Lead: Roger Baldwin



Project Title: **WUU SUSTAINABLE ENERGY PROJECT**



Project Description and Action:

The Sustainable Energy Project resulted from WUU's Energy Audit, completed in December, 2010. A variety of activities resulted from the energy audit. An evaluation of the findings of the energy audit completed on WUU's facilities was done to determine short-range and long-range priorities. This led to the promotion of small group sweat-equity projects to reduce the facilities' carbon footprint, headed by the chair of our church's physical plant committee.

An additional benefit derived from the energy audit was a program for WUU members to receive discounts when an energy audit was conducted at their home. The result of the household energy audits was a dinner program where the audit process was explained. This event was an opportunity to share with the congregation findings from the church energy audit completed which included the three buildings on our campus. We also had an opportunity to hear from WUU homeowners who had purchased the discounted energy audit discount package and ask questions.

Timeline for Completion:

- *December 2010:* Professional Energy Audit completed by Virginia Home Performance (now Energy Efficient Solutions).
- *December 2010:* an arrangement was made with the auditing company to give discounted rates for the home audits with a minimum guarantee of ten households participating
- *January 2011:* Complete the energy audits and report findings
- *April 2011:* In a meeting with the chair of the GSTF and Physical Plant Committee, it was decided to prioritize the needed improvements to WUU facilities and to begin the work in the fall of 2011.

Outcomes:

- Increased WUU and Williamsburg community awareness of the need to reduce our carbon footprint by conducting energy audits. This was accomplished through published articles about the energy audits in our weekly Spiral, our church newsletter and the GS Update and our local Virginia Gazette.
- Affordable energy audits were facilitated for 19 interested homeowners. As a result of the discounted audits, 17 participants reported making all or some of the recommended efficiency improvements, either by contracting or by their own labors. In some cases homeowners received an energy rebate for work completed in their homes.





## Completion of Action Plan - Sustainable Living

- Heightened awareness of ways that WUU should reduce its carbon footprint by correcting some of the vulnerabilities identified by conducting the audits. Thirty-seven persons attended the dinner and information session that followed the first round of energy audits; two additional homeowners purchased the discounted audit package as a result of the program.
- Promoted group interaction by working with the Physical Plant committee to address the recommendations of the energy audit. Priority was placed on Parker House since its rating was by far the lowest of the three facilities.
- Possibility of a future educational community outreach program using WUU's *Williamsburg Area Learning Tree* as a vehicle to bring together a professional energy auditor to instruct interested local citizens in learning ways to reduce energy consumption at home.

Leads: Roger Baldwin, Les Solomon

*The professional energy audit...*



## *Accomplishment of Program Goals*

The WUU Green Sanctuary Program was evaluated through two surveys, one early in the program (November, 2009) and the other recently (November 2011). While the participants were self-selected, they form a good portion of the congregation (60 and 43 respondents, respectively). A comparison of the two surveys reveals that many members of the congregation have not only been involved in the Green Sanctuary Program, but have also made significant changes in their personal lives.

Build awareness of the significance and complexity of environmental issues

WUU has raised awareness of environmental issues through worship services, the film series, LFD programs, seminars, the WUU newsletter, GS Updates, and the WUU website. In the recent survey, 94% of respondents felt that the GS Program was successful in this area. In addition, 89% of respondents listed a greater awareness of environmental issues as the most important benefit of the GS Program.

Many worship services focused on our 7<sup>th</sup> Principle, fostering a deeper understand of how the Green Sanctuary Program connects to our faith as UUs. Whether leading services or providing testimony from the heart, members of the GSTF shared their spiritual motivations for this work, inspiring others to join them. Other services explored the complexity of environmental issues including green dying, mountaintop removal, and ethical eating.

The Green Sanctuary documentary film series, including "Kilowatt Ours," "Trashed," "We are all Smith Islanders," "Saved By the Sun," "Fighting Global Warming One House at a Time," "A Convenient Truth," "HEAT," and "The End of Suburbia;" was well attended, generated good discussion, and introduced many people to these complex issues. Some topics were explored in more detail through the LFD programs, "Green Dying and Much More," "Celebrating Rainforests," and "Environmental Justice - Race and Place." These workshops and seminars provided an opportunity to learn more about particular environmental issues and reached both children and adults.

Encourage personal lifestyle changes

The surveys reveal a positive change in personal lifestyles at WUU. There was an increased percent of positive answers for all but one of the 56 questions related to personal behavior. This is also reflected by the 94% of respondents who indicated that they felt the GS Program encouraged personal lifestyle changes. The strongest gains were in areas that were already adopted by many at the time of the first survey, reflecting how personal changes can build awareness and encourage others to make similar changes.

Engage in community action on environmental issues

A large portion of survey respondents (80%) felt that the GS Program has encouraged them to engage in community action on environmental issues. WUU has been a strong supporter of the Williamsburg Climate Action Network (lead by a

## *Accomplishment of Program Goals*

WUU member) through our Share the Plate program. We have adopted a section of the road that runs in front of our property, helping to improve our neighborhood. Our CSA project provided fresh produce to those in need in our community. In addition, WUU members have helped gather petitions and attended demonstrations in support of the environment. We plan to find ways to engage more directly with the local community in the future.

Strengthen the connection between spiritual practice and Earth consciousness

The work of the GSTF is strongly rooted in spiritual practice. From the formation of the Environmental Stewardship Group who laid the groundwork, to the creation of GSTF and the many projects that have been completed, the work has always come from a foundation deeply rooted in our UU faith. The connection to the earth that guides the GSTF group at meetings is shared in the many Sunday worship services that call us to a greater awareness of the critical part we play in the interconnected web of life. Whether it is joyful dancing around the Maypole, meditative reflection in the labyrinth at Solstice, or shedding tears as we're reminded of the harm that is being done, the congregation strengthens its connection between spiritual practice and Earth Consciousness. Eighty percent of survey respondents felt that the GS Program has met this goal.

Work to heal environmental injustices

The documentary film project was well attended and presented a series of videos describing environmental injustices. Locally, WUU members worked to understand the potential effects of a new coal-fired power plant that would bring some income to a community just across the James River from Williamsburg, but at the cost of their health. When some people in the community asked for our help to prevent the construction of the power plant, many of us stepped forward by attending meetings, passing petitions, and posting signs. We have also begun researching the environmental history of our community and invited local experts to lead a public forum on environmental justice. Eighty-eight percent of survey respondents felt that the GS Program has met this goal.



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?

As mentioned above, 89% of respondents listed a greater awareness of environmental issues as the most important benefit of the GS Program. The GSTF has maintained strong communications through the WUU [website](#), a weekly [GS News](#) posting, a monthly article in the WUU newsletter, a [GS Update](#) (published monthly from 9-09 to 5-11; now published quarterly), and the Social Justice bulletin board. By providing a variety of projects that encourage participation at a different levels and inviting children, youth, and adult participation, the program has “actually changed people’s behavior in real ways. We are walking the walk.”

What has been the most difficult or challenging aspect of the program for your congregation to achieve?

Many survey respondents listed “making significant and inconvenient choices” as the most difficult aspect of the program. Some changes are painful since they require more time or money. Other changes need to be reconciled with seemingly conflicting requirements, such as reducing the use of disposables in the kitchen while maintaining sanitary practices. Often it has been difficult to increase participation in the work groups to carry out the GS projects. Reaching and engaging the entire congregation continues to be problematic. Coordinating GS projects with other groups and leaders at WUU continues to be a learning experience that has led to stronger relationships and a deeper understanding of the goals of Green Sanctuary.

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! Many positive changes are observable in our congregation's culture. Most visible is the plastics recycling effort which has really caught on. Efforts to reduce paper consumption through our new projection system help make a difference. Effort is made to purchase eco-friendly office supplies and kitchen supplies. We compost and recycle whenever possible. CFL bulbs are used where possible or when replacements are needed. Programmable thermostats are in each building. Environmental awareness has been raised through Earth Day programs, the documentary film series and reflected in our Adopt-A-Highway, RideShare, CSA project and through the professional home and church energy audits.

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

Survey responders were dedicated to continuing their efforts and most plan to do more, continuing to recycle, but also planning for an energy audit, eating more intentionally, looking into green burial, buying locally, reducing their carbon footprint, considering solar energy, and getting involved in community action. There is a commitment to “make the world a better place to live in.” Several leaders have



## Program Evaluation

already stepped forward to lead new projects and continue existing projects after we become a Green Sanctuary.

What on-going role do you expect your congregation will take in the wider community relative to environmental issues? How do you feel recognition as a Green Sanctuary affects your position in the community?

WUU, which is the sole liberal voice of religion in the area, can become much more involved in larger issues affecting our community as well as the global community. We can partner with and strongly support the environmental action efforts of local groups such as the Williamsburg Climate Action Network, but bring our spiritual and religious grounding to the work. Locally, we can become involved in the Surry Coal Fired Power Plant issue. In Virginia, we can support the people of Wise County who are struggling for existence against the powerful mining industry which is systematically destroying a way of life, health, and the landscape of Appalachia through mountaintop removal. Our involvement in and recognition as a Green Sanctuary can bring our effort for the environment to the larger community. Through this recognition, we may be able to forge new bonds with other religious communities to work on larger issues. By working outside our own spiritual community, we enlarge the circle of understanding and deepen our relationships.



### THE GREEN SANCTUARY TASK FORCE

Ann Tetrault, Nan Hart, Lola Warren, Donna Stanford,  
Les Solomon, Gillian Dawson, David Wilcox, Roger Baldwin