

Board Recommendations for Sustainable Practices
For the First Unitarian Church of St. Louis
Proposed by the Green Sanctuary Committee
February 2012

We, the Board of Trustees of First Unitarian Church of St. Louis, support the ongoing effort by this church to become accredited as a “Green Sanctuary” under the guidelines of Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations. In furtherance of that effort, we have approved the following recommendations for all committees and groups within the church:

We ask each committee or group within the church to evaluate the feasibility of these recommendations according to the group’s circumstances and needs and to implement them whenever feasible. The recommendations will be updated as members and committees give feedback and improved technologies, materials, and practices become available.

A. Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle

1. Continue to make our church building more energy efficient, for example by adding caulk, insulation, and window treatments as funds allow.
2. Reduce energy use by turning off lights, closing doors, etc.
3. When the time comes to replace heating/cooling systems and other large appliances, purchase Energy Star units.
4. Use water conscientiously in our gardens and green spaces.
5. Use compost bins regularly as part of kitchen use and gardening activities.
6. Whenever possible, use china cups and dishes, stainless steel tableware, and glasses instead of disposable items.
7. For small gatherings, use cloth napkins. For larger gatherings, use disposable napkins of recycled paper or recyclable material.
8. Use washable, reusable tablecloths whenever possible.
9. Use the “Recycling” containers placed throughout the building by our youth group and Green Sanctuary Committee.
10. Share rides to and from Sunday services, committee meetings, choir practices, and other church events.

B. Intentional Purchasing

1. Office products – use paper that is high in recycled content (100% post-consumer recycled if possible) and that has not been chemically bleached; use other office products with recycled content if possible (recycled plastic, for example).

2. Restroom and kitchen paper products – purchase towels and toilet tissue high in recycled content (100% if possible) and not chemically bleached.
3. Cleaning products – use biodegradable, non-toxic substances.
4. Avoid use of toxic pesticides in the building.
5. Use shade-grown coffee, organic tea, and fair-trade products when possible.
6. Avoid purchasing bottled water (costly and environmentally damaging).
7. For events that require single-use items, choose recycled paper and/or compostable plates, cups, and napkins (for example, Chinet® plates, polylactide cups, Marcal® napkins).
8. For refreshments, serve locally grown and/or organic food and beverages when feasible.
9. Gardening/landscaping products- use native plants, organic fertilizers, and earth-friendly products and practices; avoid use of pesticides for lawns and gardens; increase the number of trees and replace lawn area with low-maintenance plantings where possible.

C. Maintenance, paving, and construction

1. Minimize use of polluting power tools.
2. Investigate new, energy-efficient technology, with the goal of having an environmentally friendly building and grounds.
3. Choose paving methods and plan construction so as to minimize storm water run-off wherever possible.

D. Education

1. In religious education programs for children and adults, continue to emphasize teaching of the 7th Principle and related environmental values and concepts.
2. Demonstrate a commitment to educating members about environmental issues, using newsletters and other forms of communication.

E. Budgeting and Investment Policy

1. Keep environmental practices in mind when creating the annual budget.
2. When investing our congregation's funds, in addition to strictly financial considerations, take into account environmental sustainability.
3. Avoid investing in companies or funds that are not in line with our UU principles.
4. Empower the Finance Committee to define what funds would be responsible, both socially and environmentally.