

Annual Report for Green Sanctuary Committee - 2017

Green Sanctuary was accredited through the UUA, with many thanks to Misty Sheehan for her persistence and talents as a writer. Misty has since stepped down as co-chair, and Mary Van Valin has continued on as chair.

The mission of the committee and the intention of the congregation as a result of becoming a “Green Sanctuary” is to be conscious of our role and responsibilities to the web of all life and act accordingly. This year, we have not had formal meetings, which is not a good thing, and we hope to become more formalized in the coming year. What we have done this year is partner with other organizations in the community who are working on environmental issues. We have co-sponsored several events with the Citizen’s Climate Lobby to educate and train members about being advocates in DC for climate action. Our biggest endeavor is the collaborative effort on April 21st to help Traverse City Central students fund raise to send them to Washington to lobby for climate change in June. Groundwork Center, Citizen’s Climate Lobby, the Students for Environmental Advocacy, and Green Sanctuary are working together on this effort. We have historically worked on a Sunday Service on water, or other environmental topics each year. Our water service last fall was in collaboration with Sunday Services Committee and our music director, and the head scientist from Inland Seas Education Association.

Thanks to the facilities committee for their work continually to increase our LED lighting, replace an inefficient furnace, and program the many electrical draws to reduce waste of electricity. And the wonderful people who work in the kitchen and provide coffee continue a conscious decision to use real cups for coffee and tea rather than consumables. Thanks to all of you for doing dishes and saving trash from our landfills! The landscaping volunteers continue to use native plantings, which eventually may lead to less need for watering and mowing.

Things we’d like to improve for next year include: hold regular meetings (what a concept!) and even elect officers! Make intentional connections with the social justice committee, the facilities committee, and lifelong experience committee when there are connections that relate to our mission.

Aspirations: We would like to welcome more people to participate in planning. We want to have a communication plan to hear ideas from people in the congregation. We hope to coordinate a Sunday service on an environmental issue during the next year.

Mary Van Valin