

EARTH CARE INITIATIVE
MAPC 2019 Annual Report
Submitted by Elders Pat Timm and John Tallmadge

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The Earth Care Leadership Team began work in 2016 when commissioned by the Session. Our goal has been to reach into every nook and cranny of the congregation and our facilities “to become a carbon neutral and waste free church, to do what we can to help the planet rather than to harm it, and to transform consciousness through the life practices of both the congregation as a whole and our individual households.” We identified the Presbyterian Church USA Earth Care Certification Program as a guide for our work. In January 2017 the Session adopted by a unanimous vote and acclamation our Earth Care Policy (*see addendum).

2019 EARTH CARE ACTIVITIES

Green Faith: Worship

On January 13 we had planned a worship service with the Reverends Carleton and Elinor Stock, but snow cancelled worship at the Church and members who were able convened at the home of Kathy Downey and Bill Stiver for brunch and worship. The Stocks are retired ministers from St. Louis, MO who are now focusing on an environmental ministry. They are national leaders of Creation Spirituality and Earth Care.

Green Learning: Adult Encounters and Field Trips

January 12. Carleton and Elinor Stock: “Journey of the Universe” Movie Night

January 27. John Hancock, Adult Forum: “Carbon Induced Climate Change and What We Can Do About It.”

March 31. Program on Climate Change Legislation, Adult Forum: Eira Tansey: The Green New Deal; Nathaniel Lane, Ohio Green Party; and Doug Bell, Ohio Citizens Climate Lobby

May 5. John Tallmadge, Adult Forum: The Spiritual Path of American Nature Writing.”

July 17. “Paris to Pittsburgh,” a National Geographic Film. Movie Night

September 7. Field Trip to Shawnee Lookout Park with Jack Stenger and Katie Grigsby of Oxbow

November 2. Field Trip to Trammell Fossil Park Fossil Hunting with Bill Stiver

November 9. Field Trip to the Berry Center, New Castle, KY

Green Living and Lifestyle Practices:

Recycling Sundays:

February 17-All items

April 28-styrofoam blocks, noodles and egg cartons

The Recycling Center: Boxes and barrels in the Social Hall for continuous collection of dry cell batteries, eyeglasses, medicine bottles, plastic plant containers, Styrofoam egg cartons, compact fluorescent lights, and electronic devices.

“Becoming Carbon Neutral” with John Hancock, October 15, 2019 to April 21, 2020. Producing a net zero plan for each participating household, an advocacy plan for public policy, and a “how to” booklet to persuade others that it can be done.

All Church Retreat: May 31-June 2 at Hueston Woods State Park (**see addendum)

Green Building and Grounds:

New energy efficient HVAC system and windows for the office building in the works.

New energy efficient HVAC system for the education building in the works.

Solar Panels Installed

Green Outreach:

February 5. Consultation with Lakeside Presbyterian Church. John Tallmadge, Bill Stiver and John Hancock

September 6. Festival of Faith: Invitation to collaborate with other congregations

Green Umbrella Corporate Membership

Oxbow Donation

***Addendum**



EARTH CARE POLICY

To be prophetic, to become the change we know is necessary, to do the right thing now, we will take steps toward becoming a carbon-neutral and waste-free church. We will seek new approaches to our church facilities that will help the planet rather than harm it. We will take specific steps to transform consciousness through the life practices of both the congregation as a whole and our individual households through informed commitments and faithful actions.
January 25, 2017

By a unanimous vote and acclamation, Session Elders adopted the following policy statement at the regularly scheduled meeting on January 25, 2017:

Green Faith: Our worship and discipleship will celebrate God's grace and glory in creation and declare that God calls us to cherish, protect and restore this earth.

Green Learning: We will seek learning and teaching opportunities to know and understand the threats to God's creation and the damage already inflicted. We will encourage and support each other in finding ways of keeping and healing the creation in response to God's call to earth-keeping, justice and community.

Green Living And Life Style Practices: We will endeavor to manage our personal and congregational economies in a manner that respects and cherishes all life, human and nonhuman, in order to meet our own needs without compromising those of others, *or of the future*. We will personally pursue environmentally-friendly paths in our use of energy, transportation, recyclable materials, and other resources while keying them to our own spiritual practice. As a congregation, we will commit to overhaul our buildings and grounds to use energy and resources efficiently and sustainably.

Green Outreach: Our outreach will encourage public policy and community involvement that protects and restores the vulnerable and degraded earth as well as oppressed and neglected people. We will be mindful that our personal and collective actions can positively or negatively affect our neighborhood, region, nation and world. We will seek to achieve environmental justice through coalitions and ecumenical partnerships.

ADOPTED BY a Unanimous Vote and Acclamation, MT. AUBURN CHURCH SESSION, January 25, 2017

**** Addendum**

EARTH CARE RETREAT ACTIVITIES

Soundwalk-Night Sounds with Rich Bitting 8:00-9:30pm

We will walk the Blue Heron Trail in the Big Woods, a moderate 1/2 mile+ walk. This evening time should allow us to hear some subtle ambient sounds. We begin with a 15 minute orientation to intentional listening. We will then walk quietly and listen for one hour, pausing as many times as needed to briefly discuss what we are hearing. We will finish the walk with a 15 minute recap of what we heard. Bring a flashlight and wear comfortable walking shoes. Location will be announced at Friday Chili supper.

Creation-Connected-Spiritual Practices with Stacey Midge 9:30-10:45am

In our hectic lives, it's sometimes difficult to get our minds and bodies aligned with each other, let alone with creation and the Creator. We will spend a little time exploring spiritual practices that connect us to the Earth and to God, and learn ways to be mindful of nature and its Source in our ordinary lives, whether we're alone in the woods or at a desk under fluorescent lights. Meet at the cabins or, in case of rain, the Activity Room.

Nature Walk with Bill Stiver 9:30-10:40 am

Hike through a mature hardwood forest (no silly trees). Look for wildflowers, birds, creepy crawlers, Bigfoot and anything else we happen to see. We will hike the Big Woods Trail (Trail 8), starting at the trail head closest to the beach. The total length will be about one mile over gently rolling terrain, no big hills. Meet at the trail head.

Ecological Identity Workshop with John Tallmadge 11:30am-12:30pm

Our sense of identity involves many dimensions including race, gender, ethnicity, family, schooling, and, importantly, our sense of personal connection to the natural world. Reflective environmental practice engages and deepens our ecological identity through active learning in solitude, in the outdoors, and in our communities. In this workshop we'll explore this rich concept through sense of place exercises, story sharing, and perhaps a poem or two. Bring pencil, paper, and your folding chair. Meet at the cabins or, in case of rain, the Activity Room.

Becoming Carbon Neutral with John Hancock 2:00-3:15pm

Climate change is by far the largest environmental problem we are facing – or that humanity has ever faced. The principal cause of our rising temperatures and sea levels, monster storms and fires, disappearing polar ice, habitat loss, etc., is the continuing addition of carbon to the atmosphere from the burning of fossil fuels. You may be wondering, “What can be done? The problem seems so vast and beyond our reach.” While the solution (“Stop putting carbon into the atmosphere”) is not practical yet in an “absolute” sense, *getting to “Net Zero Carbon” is easier than most people think.* This workshop will offer a step-by-step guide to calculating, reducing, and offsetting the atmospheric carbon that our individual households and life choices are producing. While also advocating for national and global policy changes, we as individuals can “be the change...” that will address this global crisis. Bring a writing tool and tablet. Meet at the Activity Room, Camp Office Bldg.

Yoga with John Tallmadge 4:00-5:00pm

John Tallmadge will present a short introduction to the principles and techniques of this ancient spiritual practice designed to reconcile mind and nature. After a brief orientation we'll go through a series of simple, beginning poses emphasizing flexibility and balance. No previous experience is necessary and all levels are welcome. Even if you don't achieve enlightenment after these 40 minutes, you'll leave relaxed and refreshed. If you have access to a yoga mat, please bring it, and wear light clothing that allows freedom of movement. Meet at the Activity Room, Camp Office Bldg.

RETREAT EVALUATION

Highlights:

- The program was very well received. Participants liked the balance of planned activities and relaxing free time. All the activities were well attended and liked. Every activity was someone's favorite event of the Retreat.
- Community meals were a favorite activity, especially the Saturday dinner focus that allowed everyone to participate in preparing a meal of locally grown foods.
- Experiencing community—connecting with each other, laughter, kindness.

Recommendations:

- The Earth Care Leadership Team was moved by the enthusiastic participation of so many Mt. Auburnites (46 on Friday, 63 on Saturday, and 51 on Sunday). All along Session, Stacey, IJF, Buildings and Grounds, and Progressive Education have been especially supportive. But the Retreat felt different. We experienced Earth Care really belonging to everyone. We want to do it again. We considered alternate years, but decided that we wanted it to happen again in 2020. We thought about asking another community to provide the leadership and programming, but we believe that the participants really liked the Earth Care focus and joining in our work—becoming Earth Care. With Session and Coordinating Council's support we are ready to do it again.
- We want to find a place near enough to promote full participation by church members, with cabins, and where we can walk to activities.
- Program suggestions: planned campfire activities, more substantial hiking; program choices without conflicting schedules, a service activity like removing invasive species or picking up litter.
- When and Where: Grab a location and date ASAP. We are suggesting May 29-31. Cincinnati Public Schools are out and Memorial Day is the previous weekend. Julie S and Kathy D are researching locations and will report to the Leadership Team by E-Mail when they have a recommendation of an available site.