

EarthCare Connections

Fostering awareness of our spiritual oneness with the earth and promoting active care of creation.

<https://www.unitywum.org/earthcare>
earthcare@unity.org

*The earth does not belong to us; we belong to the earth. This we know.
All things are connected like the blood that unites one family.
Chief Seattle*



Applications for this year's Green Star Award have been extended to **Wednesday, July 31, 2024**. The award recognizes spiritual centers that completed at least three significant environmental activities in calendar year 2023. To download a copy of the application, go to <https://www.unitywum.org/earthcare>, under Green Star Award: <https://www.unitywum.org/sites/unitywum/files/2024%20Green%20Star%20Application%20for%20cy%202023.pdf>.

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The Power of Love

<https://www.unitywum.org/ec-curriculum-love>

The Power of Love is the idea of universal unity. In expression, it is the power that joins and binds together the universe and everything in it. Many of us feel love for the magnificence of nature and creation. In this module we focus on the spiritual Power of Love and how it relates to and is enhanced by nature and Earthcare.

By the end of this module learners will be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of love as a spiritual principle.
- Identify links between love as spiritual principle and the awe, connection to, and concern for nature in ways that can benefit Unity teachings.
- Integrate the spiritual principle of love and Earth care into Unity services and teachings.

The module includes an Affirmation, Prayer, An article by Kathy Harwood Long on the subject of "Saving the planet. Human talk."

The Lesson Engagement includes a Sunday Talk, a Self-directed Micro-learning course, Youth Curriculum and Eco-Celebration.

Resources include:

Love Thy Nature. Filmmaker Sylvie Rokab. Narrated by Liam Neeson

<https://lovethynature.com>

“This film reveals how a renewed connection with nature can ignite a sense of meaning and wonder so profound that it touches us at the very core of what it means to be human.”

David Attenborough. He has made numerous films of the beauty and wonders of the natural world all over the globe, including stunning photos found nowhere else. Any of his films that are available through BBC Films generally have no screening fees for non-profits.

Books & Publications

Devotions; the Selected Poems of Mary Oliver. Oliver, Mary. Penguin, 2017.

Mary Oliver’s poetry celebrates the wonders of nature and her lifelong love of the natural world is expressed in numerous poems.

Compassionate Universe, Eknath Eswaren (Seven Week Series for ministries/spirit groups-permitted)

Finding Beauty in a Broken World, by Terry Tempest Williams.

Quotes:

“Nature is held together by the energy of love.” - Deepak Chopra

Wayshower Congregations

As part of the *12 Powers for Our Planet* initiative, Unity EarthCare selected three spiritual centers as “Wayshowers.” These congregations: Unity of the Blue Ridge, Mills River, NC; Unity of Walnut Creek, CA; and Unity Community of Central Oregon, are among the most experienced EarthCare participants in all of Unity. Not only have they completed all seven steps and required actions of the *Path to EarthCare*, but continue to undertake environmental activities that promote its vision.

The knowledge and expertise of these environmental leaders have offered to help other spiritual centers that may not be as far along the *Path*, or who are just looking for ideas or suggestions. Here is a summary of what each Wayshower offers:

Unity of the Blue Ridge, Mills River, NC

Sustainability and love of Mother Earth has been a passion of Unity of The Blue Ridge for many years. We would love to be able to share our experience, ideas and knowledge with other Unity congregations and Green Teams.

A seven-time winner of the Green Star Award, Unity of Blue Ridge has an impressive list of accomplishments. This is no doubt due in part that they have an active “Unity Sustainability Team” that actively supports and advises all other ministry programs and teams on ways to

be most energy/resource conscious and “green.”

Unity of the Blue Ridge feels they can be of most service to others in the following areas:

- Inspire others through sermons, prayers, songs and special ceremonies.
- Collaboration with others regarding global environmental issues.
- Sacred Activism. (Blends spirituality with a passion for social change. It offers a pathway for engaging in pressing environmental and social justice issues in a way that is aligned with Unity’s core principles and that rises above the political fray and conflict).
- Social and environmental justice. (Promote an environmentally just world that provides worthy and fair treatment of all human and non-human sentient beings.
- How to create an environmental program and keeping it going.
- Youth and Family Ministry programs and activities.
- Mindful Eating (e.g., Programs that help restore our sacred relationships with the earth, animals, and all creation thousands of the food choices we make).
- Sustainable Living (recycling, energy conservation, waste minimization).
- Conservation of Natural Resources.
- Promote Respect for the Interdependence of the Universe (e.g., activities that honor our spiritual commitment to the care, support, and defense of the balance between our individual needs and nature).
- Assistance to evolving ministries.

For more information, please contact Judie McKown at judiemckown@yahoo.com or by calling 828-883-5752.

Unity of Walnut Creek, CA

Unity of Walnut Creek (UWC), has an active environmental committee whose key objectives are: a) to inspire, provide information and educate on climate change and solutions. b) promote understanding of our interconnectedness with all people, all living things, and the web of creation. c) advocate for Environmental and Social Justice (e.g., promote an environmentally socially just world that is free from oppression and discrimination against people and the inhumane treatment of animals).

This environmental leader feels it can best assist your congregation in the areas of:

Inspire others through sermons, prayers, songs and special ceremonies

Participated with the local Ohlone Tribe, whose representatives led a land ceremony with chanting, drumming, and native language education as part of its 75th anniversary celebration.

UWC recommends you connect with a local Ohlone tribal elder, ideally the tribe upon whose land the center is located, and financially contribute to their work for clean-up day plans and their ceremony: *Tending Our Sacred Grounds*. This annual celebration of Earth Day opens with a ceremony on Labyrinth; bell ringing each hour for pause to bless the earth; refresh and clean-up of UWC campus; ending with a plant-based meal for community members. They would be happy to share ideas for a similar type ceremony of your own.

How to create an environmental program and keep it going

Active team since March 2021, UWC can share ways to organize an environmental committee, obtain board support and create a community alliance oriented team. Activity examples include organizing annual events such as *Tending Our Sacred Grounds*, California Coastal Cleanup, EarthCare participation in Summer Picnic and Music Events. In addition, how to create an EarthCare section in local newsletters and bulletin boards dedicated to environmental issues.

Sustainable Living (recycling, energy conservation, waste minimization).

UWC is committed to recycling and has developed a program and manual. It includes ways to reduce or eliminate waste during community events and train staff or event coordinators in the most Earth-friendly disposal methods.

For more information, please contact Lee Sparling at LSparling22@comcast.net, or by calling 925) 361-4504.

Unity Spiritual Community of Central Oregon (USCCO)

USCCO has had an active environmental committee for seven years. It meets monthly to discuss a particular issue. Reflecting their EarthCare ethic, the mission statement of Unity Spiritual Community CO is, “We stand together to create a global ecosystem of unity, deep wisdom and loving kindness.”

Direct social justice activities are an important part of their EarthCare efforts. They regularly provide service at local food banks and contribute to food and clothing drives benefiting those experiencing homelessness.

They also took advantage of the internal audit format provided by EarthCare to complete the audit requirement of Level C. On-site steps have included retrofitting for efficient lighting fixtures, using recycled paper products and non-toxic janitorial products, and implementing low-water, non-chemical landscaping design and maintenance.

In early 2023, inspired by Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, USCCO partnered with the local Unitarian Universalist congregation in co-hosting an Earth Summit event that outlined issues related to climate change, upcoming bills in the Oregon legislature, and how faith communities can express their views on these issues. This included a joint statement of purpose, followed by founding “Central Oregon Interfaith Earth Care (COIEC).”

COIEC hosts regular events such as the Earth Summit and movie screenings. The congregation has also delivered Sacred Activism and Spiritual Economics events.

For more information, please contact cylvia@cylviahayes.com, 541.280.5040.

Please take advantage of the assistance that these congregations can provide!

What You Can Do to Help the Rainforest

There is a growing global crisis that threatens our future: the rampant destruction of rainforests around the world. These vital ecosystems not only support millions of Indigenous and forest people and countless plant and animal species—they are also our most powerful

natural defense against climate change.



The Amazon is home to 400 distinct Indigenous peoples who are its best stewards. The Amazon River Basin is the planet’s largest tropical rainforest. A stabilizer of the global climate, it contains one-third of all species on Earth and a large percentage of the world’s flowing fresh water. The forest and its peoples are facing grave threats due to deforestation, resource extraction, land grabs, and destructive development projects. At Amazon Watch, we are launching bold, strategic, and timely actions to advance and amplify the solutions of Indigenous peoples.

According to the Science Panel for the Amazon, the Amazon rainforest is at a “tipping point” - the point at which the degradation of the ecosystem is irreversible. Deforestation across the Amazon is 17%, and it is approaching 20% in Brazil. The tipping point will be reached at 20-25% deforestation, not 40% as previously predicted. To avert the tipping point, Amazon Watch is working towards the permanent protection of 80% of the Amazon via solidarity campaigns for the demarcation of ancestral territories. (Amazon Watch; <https://amazonwatch.org/work>).

Here are some education and activist organizations that you can support to make a difference:

- **Global Witness**. According to Global Witness, when founded in 1993, we were pioneers in seeing the link between natural resources, conflict and corruption. For over 25 years, we have investigated and exposed environmental and human rights abuses in the oil, gas, mining, and timber sectors, and tracked ill-gotten money and influence through the global financial and political system. Today, we continue to focus on abusive actors, misuse of power and financial flows, but have turned our focus on some of the most urgent issues facing humanity: the climate emergency and attacks on civic space (<https://www.globalwitness.org/en/about-us/>).
- **Amazon Watch**. Amazon Watch is a nonprofit organization founded in 1996 to protect the rainforest and advance the rights of Indigenous peoples in the Amazon Basin in Ecuador, Peru, Colombia, and Brazil. We work in solidarity with Indigenous and environmental organizations in campaigns for human rights, corporate accountability, and the preservation of the Amazon’s ecological systems (<https://amazonwatch.org/>).
- **Rainforest Action Network (RAN)**. Since 1985, RAN has secured hundreds of critical victories for the environment and Indigenous communities around the world; and has

helped protect millions of acres in Indonesia, Canada, Chile, Brazil and beyond (<https://www.ran.org/>).

- **Rainforest Foundation.** U.S., Partners with Indigenous peoples by co-creating and sharing technologies, tools and training to protect their rainforest territories (<https://rainforestfoundation.org/>).
- **The Pachamama Alliance.** With roots in the Amazon rainforest, we equip people around the world with inspiration and training to regenerate the planet’s ecosystems, bringing justice to their communities, and restore our relationships with the Earth, each other and ourselves. Since 1996, Pachamama has worked in partnership with the Indigenous people of the Sacred Headwaters region of the Amazon rainforest in Ecuador to defend their land and culture on their terms. **This work is accomplished through strategic programs carried out by our sister organization in Ecuador—Fundación Pachamama** (<https://pachamama.org/>).

EarthCare News

Angela Tetrault has joined the EarthCare Team. Angela is a former member of Youth of Unity in Renaissance Unity in Royal Oak Michigan. She also is an ongoing supporter of the Great Lakes Region Youth of Unity (YOU) retreats. Angela currently is studying to be a paralegal and would like to support EarthCare initiatives by assisting with social media--creating graphics and such.



As Angela says, “I’m delighted to support you in any way with your life goals, and interests in supporting our precious earth, her creatures, water, and air. I’m looking forward to meeting you in person since we live in the same area! Thank you for joining this devoted group of

folks who are working in so many ways within our Unity movement and beyond--with so much love and integrity.”

Welcome aboard, Angela!

In other news, the EarthCare website has been reorganized and significantly expanded, we are working with UWM to add an EarthCare class to the Ministerial Curriculum, mentoring/collaborative calls may be expanded and we are working with UWM to offer a Zoom call to discuss the numerous tools and resources available through “12 Powers for our Planet.” Stay Tuned!

Mentoring/Collaborative Calls



Mary Gerkan hosts these calls monthly. A different topic is highlighted each time. One of the benefits of participating in these calls is that they provide a way for you to connect with other churches in your respective region and open new avenues to collaborate.

A different topic is selected at each meeting and creative ideas are shared. Recent ideas include: “Forest or Nature bathing/ Circulation Day” in which items no longer needed are shared and given away, having native plant tours and partnering with other faith organization for speakers.

For the date and time, please email Mary, at agreatpickle@gmail.com.

Facebook

Beth Remmes administers EarthCare’s Facebook Page. Over 1600 followers have discovered the timely resources and interchange of ideas that it contains. To join them, please go to:

www.facebook.com/UnityEarthCare



YouTube Channel

Angela Tetrault has taken over as host of EarthCare’s YouTube channel. The channel contains links to numerous videos in the areas of Social Justice, Educational, Spiritual, Poems and Inspiration, and Music. New ones will be added soon so please check it out!

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC4iYARFqsqLhuodoDC52R5Q/playlists>

Questions? Here’s Where to Go.

For general questions, please email earthcare@unity.org or call Mike McCord at 913.907.4061. Or contact the representative in your region:

<u>Region</u>	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Email Address</u>
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