

First Parish Church, UU, Northboro

Green Sanctuary Initiative

Green Policy Guide

Introduction

The Standing Committee approved the following green policies on November 28, 2007 to support and advance The First Parish Church, UU, Northborough congregation's commitment to live in greater accordance with the UU Seventh Principle, "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are part." The approved policies are the culmination of the UUA-affiliated Ministry for the Earth Green Sanctuary Accreditation process that formally began in June 2005 at First Parish. These policies seek to support and advance ideals and actions established in the 2006 Unitarian Universalist Association Statement of Conscience on Global Warming/Climate Change (see www.uua.org/socialjustice/socialjustice/statements/8061.shtml)

In addition, the policies were created in consultation with church members, committees, and staff. They are based on findings of a comprehensive environmental audit and include greening efforts currently practiced by the church.

These policies reflect our commitment to make meaningful changes toward a more healthy, just, peaceful, and sustainable world for all. They seek to incorporate into the framework of church operations loving, intentional, responsible, and conscious action to mitigate impacts that threaten nature/creation, the most vulnerable among us, and the quality of life of current and future generations.

Worship and Religious Education

First Parish services and teachings exhibit a strong commitment to honoring of the earth, and passionate advocacy for its preservation. We have a heritage of celebrating and appreciating the spiritual essence that embodies nature. Continuing this,

- We affirm to spiritually nurture, inspire, and empower people to do all that can be done to heal and restore creation for future generations.

Green Policies

1) Building and Grounds: Energy Use

Recognizing that the majority of human produced greenhouse gas (ghg) emissions are the result of fossil fuel energy use, energy conservation and efficiency measures in our church buildings provide the greatest opportunity for reducing climate change.

Heating of buildings:

- Keep thermostat set to 55 degrees F in winter during times of no occupancy; raise temperature to 60-65 degrees when occupied.
- Use rooms that can be heated more efficiently; e.g. the Burns room has a separate heating zone for that room, which is much more efficient than Parish Hall rooms, which require heating of the entire floor of Parish Hall.
- Building utilization should maximize opportunity for consecutive or concurrent activities, when building is already heated.
- Insulate and seal the buildings against heat loss as much as possible.
- Optimize means to passively heat and cool buildings.

Electricity:

- Purchase renewable electricity generation.
- Turn off lights in church areas when not in use.
- Maximize use of motion sensing light fixtures throughout facilities.
- Turn off computers and other electronic equipment when not in use.
- Replace all lighting with efficient alternatives (LED and Compact Fluorescent, CFL).
- When replacing appliances and equipment, purchase highly-rated energy efficient models.

2) Procurement/Vendors/Services

We will strive to purchase goods and services that minimize environmental impact, and will factor the monetary cost with the cost to the environment.

- We will only consume what we need.
- The option to purchase long-lasting and Green Seal, Energy Star and other approved equipment will be favored. (www.greenseal.org, www.epa.gov/energystar).
- Items will be repaired rather than replaced as much as possible.
- Purchase of used (equal or greater energy efficiency) equipment will be considered.

- Recycled-content products will be preferred over products made from virgin materials (e.g., office paper, printer ink, disposable paper products, trash bags).
- We will strive to minimize our use of disposable items and maximize use of reusable items (i.e., cups, forks, knives, plates, etc)
- Purchase of kitchen goods will favor low packaging content
- Locally grown foods and less-processed food items will be sought.
- Least-toxic cleaning products will be sought for kitchen and maintenance (biodegradable, no phosphate, no dyes/fragrance).

3) Recycling/Waste Reduction

- Recycle paper, cans, bottles, and plastics within church facilities and at church events.
- Compost biodegradable kitchen scraps and lawn clippings.
- Print and copy documents on both sides of paper when possible.

4) Green Building Design

- Incorporate sustainable design and green building concepts in remodeling and/or construction projects to meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification standards.

5) Investments

- Trustees of church endowment funds will consider environmental impacts of church investment decisions in addition to their social responsibility, to maintain consistency with our Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism.