



**The Unitarian Universalist Associations of Congregations Green Sanctuary Program:**  
**<http://www.uua.org/environment/sanctuary/index.shtml>**

Our Green Sanctuary Committee of the First Unitarian Church of Austin welcomes all people to join. Our sacred environment as well as conservation of energy and water are issues that are important to each of us individually and to the church as a whole. Our Green Sanctuary Committee is committed to using our time, treasure and talent to help individuals and our church explore the best way we can all respond to these issues in ways that are reasonable and effective.

As Unitarian Universalists, we engage in public life by participating in and hosting Austin's Interfaith Environmental Network, and its Energy Action Team, which is engaged in producing successful strategies, energy audits, manuals, energy rate advocacy and more to help churches decrease their carbon footprints. We have met with the Mayor and City Council Members during the Austin Energy rate formulation period to encourage fair treatment of Houses of Worship.

In our Green Sanctuary Committee we covenant with one another to:

- Recognize the fragile and interdependent state of our Earth and all living things.
- Recognize the need to protect and maintain the quality of our common life-giving natural resources such as water, soil, and air.
- Recognize the need to join with others to bring forth a sustainable society based on respect for our planet and all its life-giving resources.

The FUUCA Green Sanctuary Committee has promoted the following activities at our church this year:

1. Renewed our Green Choice contract with Austin Energy for another 10 years
2. Sponsored the April Fuels Day alternative vehicle fair
3. Provided Summer Religious Education Environmental Curriculum assistance
4. Co-sponsored the Water Communion in September to reduce, reuse and recycle water
5. Partnered the National Vehicle Plug-in day in September with the Austin Chapter of the Sierra Club
6. Encouraged FUUCA church members to consider electric, hybrid and other fuel efficient vehicles
7. Provided water saving showerheads and aerators obtained from the city and encouraged installation
8. Encouraged the planting of xeriscape drought tolerant plants
9. Encouraged installation of CFL bulbs and other energy saving devices in individual homes.

Richard and Beki Halpin  
Co-Chairs Green Sanctuary Committee, FUUCA  
[green@austinuu.org](mailto:green@austinuu.org)  
512-288-4080

## Accomplishments Before IEN, from Aug. 2003 to Aug. 2011

First church in Texas to have its grounds certified as a wildlife habitat, less water, less chemicals

Energy audit by Austin Energy (Aug. 2003), additional energy audit by Austin Energy (Aug. 2011)

Retrofitted fluorescent light fixtures—changed magnetic ballast lights to electronic ballast

Replaced four old non-programmable thermostats with programmable thermostats (free from City)

Replaced 40 watt incandescent Exit sign bulbs with 1 watt LED bulbs (free from the City)

Obtained and installed low-flow toilets (toilets free from City + rebate toward installation)

Posted “Green Tips” in the Church Newsletter and on the Green Sanctuary Bulletin Board

Installed low water use native plants and gradually removed invasive plants from the grounds

Individual members of Green Sanctuary and Grounds Committee donated and installed a number of low-water native trees and other plants at U-Bar-U (Our UU retreat near Kerrville)

Green Sanctuary Committee recommended and for several years in a row, First UU made “Split the Plate” donations to Tree Folks

Social Action Committee held a three-week class on environmental actions for individuals—members purchased the book *Low Carbon Diet* with informative suggestions/actions:  
<http://www.empowermentinstitute.net/lcd/>

Green Sanctuary Committee recommended and helped raise funds for installation of 12 kWh solar system

Green Sanctuary Committee recommended changing trash collection from BFI to Texas Disposal Systems (a more environmentally friendly company)

Green Sanctuary recommended zero emission grounds maintenance  
([chrisccarter@cleanairlawncare.com](mailto:chrisccarter@cleanairlawncare.com))

Grounds and Green Sanctuary Committees arranged for a City audit of the First UU sprinkler system

Green Sanctuary Committee recommended composting process on site, with some success

Public Affairs Forum Committee invited numerous Forum speakers to present on environmental issues.

Supported Caritas Food Bank, Sustainable Food Center and Capitol Area Food Bank

First UU held numerous activities surrounding Food sustainability during Journey with Food month (Spring 2011)

Supported volunteer day at Urban Patchwork community food gardens (Spring 2011)

Installed timer on electric hot water heater provide free by the City

Supports yearly Hands of Housing project—which helps fix up low-income homes to help with energy conservation depending on what particular kinds of renovation are done on a specific house