

UUCSC Green Task Force: Positive Actions and Positive Futures

First someone had an idea: screen a film to begin a dialogue within UUCSC about climate change and energy. On Jan. 31st, *The 11th Hour* was screened to an audience of more than thirty people after church. Following the film, a discussion group gathered to talk about ways in which the congregation could organize to address these large and complex issues.

We agreed to form a task force—the UUCSC Green Task Force—within the congregation to promote and advance sustainability and a positive approach to environmental crises. This would actually be an expansion of the policy statement articulated by the Social Action Committee:

A congregation that lives out its commitment to the Earth by creating a sustainable lifestyle for its members as individuals and a faith community. Sustainable living is not about our material comfort (though these choices are an important part of the overall lifestyle); it is about choosing to live in a way that nurtures life, builds relationships, and reject material as the sole determinant of happiness.

As both secular and faith-based groups and committees around the world look squarely at the seemingly insurmountable challenges posed by climate change and the end of the fossil fuel era, it is heartening to know that a group within UUCSC is prepared to look at solutions that will support, educate and nurture our own congregation.

The good news is that there are very good models for action that already exist: the Transition Towns movement and the Post Carbon Institute (www.postcarbon.org) are a few examples. Our own Rhode Island website is PostCarbon Rhode Island (www.relocalize.us) and the Apeiron Institute (www.apeiron.org) is doing very important work. Rhode Island



Interfaith Power and Light (www.riipl.org) is an organization devoted to bringing green principles and practices to Rhode Island houses of worship. Rhode Island has a thriving local food movement, and is active in the implementation of renewable energy. So we already have a lot going for us!

Our meeting on Feb. 21st helped this new group hone in on some possible approaches to begin our activities within the church. A few highlights: We talked about peak oil, and climate change, and the need for concerned people to educate themselves to counter the disinformation that abounds right now regarding these issues. We all agreed that the focus needs to be on positive solutions, not just the very ominous facts and projections.

A committee member generously offered the church a seed-starting system that can be used by the children and the youth in the congregation, and the logical progression of this idea was the planting of gardens on the property. We discussed the need for adopting practices that support lower energy use: improving recycling and waste reduction, composting, and getting used to slightly cooler temperatures (and sweaters!) in church spaces in an effort to reduce fuel costs.

The idea was presented for a church honor roll, or a means of highlighting the congregation members who are manifesting green practices. Rod and Carole Driver's energy efficient home was mentioned as a shining example.

Everyone agreed that we need visible, practical solutions that exemplify green principles. The idea was also presented that film screenings and book groups provide an important means of outreach to the rest of the congregation. We talked briefly about creating a lending library of books, DVDs and other resources, as a means of sharing information. We also talked about political action and engaging local and state politicians as an important component of this work.

Not a bad start for a new committee! It's clear that this is a powerful way to demonstrate the conscious and caring people that make up UUCSC, and bring about lasting changes to make our community more resilient in difficult times.

If you are interested in participating, please contact Maureen Grove at maureengrove@verizon.net or David Floyd at relocalize1@gmail.com. Our next meeting is Sunday, March 21st after church. — David Floyd