

Green Committee Update and Action Plan

These past couple of months the Green Committee has worked very hard to finish our Green Sanctuary Candidacy Application. We finished the 12-page application and mailed it to the UUA. Now we will await feedback and recommendations from the UUA's Green Sanctuary Program, but in the next several weeks, we should be listed as a Green Sanctuary Candidate, or a congregation in the process of becoming a designated Green Sanctuary. Below is our current Action Plan. We encourage you to read over it and become familiar with all of the projects we will be helping to create or implement in the coming months. We also encourage you to help us, or continue to help us, achieve all of our goals. If you would like to get involved with the Green Committee, or if you would like more information about the action plan, please contact Dionne Procell at dprocell@comcast.net. If you would like to help us with the Heirloom Plant and Craft Sale on Saturday, April 17th from 9 AM – 2 PM, please come out and help that day. That day we'll also be weeding and heavily mulching the garden plots in the parking lot. And Susan Caldwell and the RE teachers need help planting a vegetable garden in one of the plots out front. So, volunteer your time and help us become more green!

Worship and Celebration Projects (2 required)

Project Title: The Green Sanctuary Committee's Seasonal Services

Project Description: The Green Sanctuary Committee will continue to be actively involved with, and in some cases, plan entire worship services centered around the solstices and equinoxes each year. Committee members have and will continue to write and deliver "sermons" and children's messages and incorporate readings and music. The spring equinox service in particular will be entirely coordinated by the Green Sanctuary Committee. Themes included in these services are appreciation and understanding of what each seasonal change brings to the planet and can bring to us and the in-and-outs and joys of sustainable living.

Timeline for Completion: Summer and Winter Solstices, Vernal and Autumnal Equinoxes

Lead: Dionne Procell

Project Title: Summer Harvest Potluck and Celebration

Project Description: In previous years, All Souls has had summer harvest potlucks. We will continue this tradition. Each year, the Green Committee will plan and organize a summer harvest potluck celebration after church, encouraging members to bring food from their home gardens and using items from the RE veggie plot and Camp Forbing Garden plots. During the potluck, we will highlight some of the programs we've been working on and have a special blessing for our food.

Timeline for Completion: Annually, beginning this summer

Lead: Bob Jordan

Religious Education Projects (2 required, 1 for children and 1 for adults)

Project Title: RE Veggie Plot and Lessons

Project Description: The RE program has a sustainable vegetable plot in one of the green spaces in the parking lot area. Last year we grew a number of vegetables, and we had harvests and planting activities planned for RE kids. This year the RE teachers and students will plan their veggie plot, plant it, and harvest it regularly throughout the summer and fall. The RE director will assist in developing lesson plans for the RE teachers to use that will incorporate the garden.

Timeline for Completion: Ongoing every summer and fall

Lead: Susan Caldwell

Project Title: Camp Forbing Garden Workshops

Project Description: Through our partnership and involvement with the Camp Forbing Garden, the All Souls Green Sanctuary Committee will help the Camp Forbing Garden Team organize and facilitate some garden workshops and open them to the All Souls community. Workshops will be on composting, sustainable

vegetable and fruit gardening, creating worm bins, building and maintaining potato bins, heirloom vegetable plants, conducting soil tests and sustainable soil improvement, among others. We hope to also develop a spiritual gardening workshop. We will plan to have at least one workshop open to All Souls members a year.

Timeline for Completion: Begin in spring 2011 and conduct one each year.

Lead: Kathy Osuch

Environmental Justice (2 required, 1 long-term that actively promotes justice for those affected by environmental injustices and creates relationships)

Project Title: Camp Forbing Community Garden Involvement

Project Description: All Souls members and Green Sanctuary Committee are intimately involved with the area's newest community garden, which is located directly across the street from the sanctuary at the local YMCA chapter's Camp Forbing. Members of the Green Sanctuary Committee helped form the idea of the garden and who should participate/how it should be set up and have been involved since the beginning. The garden's mission is to teach folks of all ages and diverse backgrounds and faiths about sustainable gardening and nutritional eating. The garden, which will soon expand, consists of 32 vegetable plots, 8 of which are donation plots, where the harvest of each of these plots goes to one of two local charities, the Providence House, a shelter and education program for abused or homeless women and children, and the Rescue Mission, a shelter and education program for homeless individuals. The plot subscribers and garden participants are members of the local YMCA chapter, Master Gardeners affiliated with LSU AgCenter, and members of 3 different area churches, First Baptist-Shreveport, Grace Community United Methodist Church, and All Souls Unitarian-Universalist. Two Green Sanctuary Committee members are on the Camp Forbing Garden Team and help plan and implement garden or educational workshops and workdays, most of which are open to the public or friends of the garden as well as garden participants. Several All Souls members have their own vegetable plots, and the Green Committee has their own plot as well.

Timeline for Completion: Ongoing, garden is year-round

Lead: Dionne Procell and Susan Caldwell

Project Title: Collaboration with A Better Shreveport's Coates Bluff Greenbelt Project

Project Description: A Better Shreveport, a local community non-profit and environmental activist group, has launched an ongoing project to create greenbelts throughout Shreveport, focusing first in areas that are disadvantaged. All Souls members and the Green Sanctuary Committee will become more actively involved with this organization and provide support and volunteers for this project. Currently, A Better Shreveport is in the cleanup phase and will begin the trail-making phase later this year. They meet several times a year for cleanups, and once the area's first greenbelt is created, they will move on to other disadvantaged neighborhoods, providing peaceful and safe pathways throughout a number of distressed neighborhoods in the city.

Timeline for Completion: Ongoing

Lead: Barbara Jarrell and Alan Brown

Sustainable Living (4 required, 1 that addresses energy conservation)

Project Title: Making the Church More Energy Efficient

Project Description: This will be a continuous project managed by the Green Sanctuary Committee in cooperation with the Building and Grounds Committee with oversight and participation from the church Board of Directors. A list will be generated that details possible projects and building improvements that would make the church more energy efficient. This list will be sorted by impact and cost and made available to the board and the Building and Grounds Committee. Recommendations will be made by the Green Sanctuary Committee on which projects will offer the greatest return on investment from the standpoint of energy efficiency. The goal is to do at least two projects per year.

Timeline for Completion: This will be an ongoing project with yearly updates to review progress and update and re-order the list.

Lead: Jared Davis and Kevin Hayes

Project Title: Repairing and Improving the Nature Trail (repairing the trail, removing some harmful vegetation, labeling the native trees and shrubs for RE use)

Project Description:

Several years ago, All Souls members constructed a nature trail and a viewing platform in the wooded area behind the church sanctuary. Over the years, the trail and the wooded area, which also had some labeling of native trees and shrubs, have been seriously neglected. Many All Souls members have expressed interest in repairing and reviving the nature trail, but no one has coordinated this or launched a church-wide campaign. It is part of the mission of the Green Sanctuary Committee to, along with the Building and Grounds Committee, plan and implement a multi-year campaign to repair, revive, and improve the nature trail and surrounding area.

This plan involves several steps. To address forestry and erosion issues in the wooded area, the Green Sanctuary Committee will enlist the help of LSU AgCenter forestry experts and develop a sustainable plan to improve the area and remove non-native species like bamboo. We will also develop a strategy to repairing the trail itself in 3-4 stages, improving the walkways with sustainable materials. And we will find All Souls members or AgCenter volunteers to help us identify and label native shrubs and trees along the trail. A renewed and improved trail, complete with readable plant identification labels, will be more appreciated and widely used by All Souls members. We will organize workdays over a series of several years and launch a multi-year fundraising plan, as well as request that funds from the annual church budget be set aside for this project. Throughout the plan implementation and after its completion, we will encourage the use of the trail for worship or meditation purposes, organize regular cleanup days, and work with the RE volunteers to create lessons for RE classes.

Timeline for Completion: 2-4 years, beginning in the summer of 2011

Lead: Dionne Procell and Alan Brown

Project Title: Butterfly Garden and National Wildlife Habitat Certification

Project Description:

Next spring, the Green Sanctuary Committee will design and plant a butterfly and hummingbird garden in two large green areas located in the church parking lot. We will not only plant the garden, but we will follow the guidelines required by the National Wildlife Foundation's Wildlife Habitation Certification process. In our application, we will also be able to refer to the already sustainable and native habitat that exists in the wooded area behind the sanctuary. Once approved, we will purchase two Certified Wildlife Habitat signs and install one by the nature trailhead and one in the most visible garden plot located in the parking lot area.

The Green Sanctuary Committee can then help RE teachers use the butterfly and hummingbird garden in lesson plans. We hope that our butterfly garden will become a Monarch Watch Station, and we will plan to educate church members on the purpose of the garden and encourage their involvement. We want to show that a butterfly and hummingbird garden uses many native plants, is relatively low-maintenance, includes mostly perennials and therefore involves many one-time investments, and is an attractive, sustainable, habitat-building, and mostly year-round alternative to traditional landscaping used at members' residences.

Timeline for Completion: Begin in Spring 2011 and Receive Certification by the end of 2011

Lead: Dionne Procell and Alan Brown

Project Title: Recycling Program

Project Description:

For a number of years, All Souls has recycled many items used in the kitchen and office areas. Our kitchen has reusable dinnerware, flatware, and glassware, and members have always encouraged their use during social events. There are recycling containers in the kitchen, which is adjacent to the social hall, the second-most-used area in the church. Staff members or volunteers regularly empty these containers.

The church previously had rented a large recycling receptacle, which was located in the parking lot. Members brought many of their recyclables to this bin, and staff members emptied recycling containers from

the kitchen and office there. For well over a year, however, we no longer had access to a recycling receptacle or facility, as the city's recycling programs have changed. Green Sanctuary Committee members voluntarily removed the recycling from the office and kitchen areas and took the material home to put in their curbside bins. Last fall, however, the Green Sanctuary Committee was able to find a new recycling company, and now we have a large receptacle for the church's use and for the use of those members who do not have access to curbside recycling.

The Green Sanctuary Committee has also encouraged the use of recycling and reusing chargers for electrical devices by placing a box by the sanctuary door for members to donate items or take what they need. And the committee will purchase, and have RE classes decorate, recycling cans for each classroom, as we recognized that many items are going into the trash in these areas.

Timeline for Completion: Ongoing, with recycling program for RE classes beginning in Summer 2010

Lead: Laura Davis

Additional (2 required, these can relate to the program elements of your choice)

Project Title: Native Planting Program and Adult RE

Project Description: All Souls' native plant program seeks to promote the knowledge and use of native plants in the All Souls' church landscape and in our homes. Use of native plants reduces the need to water, fertilize and provide extra care needed for plants not adapted to our climate and provides habitat and food for native species of animals, birds, and other fauna. We will offer an adult RE workshop on native planting and display our plans for increasing the amount of native plants on the church grounds.

Timeline for Completion: Ongoing, beginning in fall of 2010

Lead: Kathy Osuch

Project Title: Heirloom Plant Awareness and Fundraiser Programs

Project Description: All Souls' heirloom plant awareness program will help promote the knowledge and use of heirloom plants in the garden. Heirlooms are old time varieties that people have saved (seeds or pass-along plants) over the years/generations as they have exceptional qualities for flavor, cold hardiness or pest resistance. Growing heirlooms helps with bio-diversity and provides a superior quality vegetable/fruit that is not available in the grocery store.

Timeline for Completion: Ongoing, each spring

Lead: Kathy Osuch and Dionne Procell