

ACTION PLAN
For Channing Memorial Church
Green Congregation Program

WORSHIP AND CELEBRATION

Rev. Amy Freedman, Sally Hanchett, Barbara Russell-Willett

Goal: To build the connection between spiritual practice and environmental consciousness.

Initiated projects to continue:

WC-C-1. Use our green soy candle inside the chalice every Sunday. (Already in place)

WC-C-2. Incorporate prayers or readings about caring for the planet and becoming a green Congregation into the annual ingathering service water communion.

WC-C-3. Continue fall & spring volunteer workdays outside involving tending the earth, planting flowers. Coordinate plans with Earth Justice and Religious Education.

WC-C-4. Include Flower Communion in every Religious Education Sunday celebration. (Done on June 8, 2008)

Projects to initiate:

WC-I-1. Institute an annual Earth Day Service with lay leader and members of the Green Congregation Committee, and in the future coordinating with Green Congregation for an Earth Day program following the service. (Done on April 20, 2008)

WC-I-2. Design and create (perhaps engaging older RE kids) a new Earth flag/banner to hang in the Sanctuary. Invite musicians in congregation to write our own Channing green song of praise and awareness, to be sung in future services

WC-I-3. Dedicate a Soulful Sundown service to focus on rites of seasonal passage. (Soulful Sundown is a Friday evening program held several times a year, incorporating community and spirituality with a variety of performing arts. The programs are open to the public and are preceded by a soup and bread dinner.)

Projects to consider for future recertification:

WC-F-1. Create a Native American service about nature, possibly led by Strong Woman, (a Rhode Island activist for Native American understanding, recognition and rights,) and including drummers.

WC-F-2. After property master plan has been finalized, so that the configuration of our buildings has been determined, plant a tree to replace our horse chestnut, a huge, ancient, treasured tree which had to be removed from the church's yard for safety reasons.

WC-F-3. Reestablish Easter Sunrise Service, a nature-centered meditation program to which all denominations are invited, on Hanging Rock at Norman Bird Sanctuary,. Channing hosted this program for several years in a beautiful location with a stunning view overlooking the Sanctuary on one side and the ocean on the other.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Rachel Balaban, Sally Hanchett

Goal: To provide our community's children, youth and adults with concrete examples of environmental ethics.

Initiated projects to continue:

RE-C-1. Channing RE has adopted an earth-centered curriculum. For the spring pillar, the children will be learning from our curriculum, Green Congregation Issues. RE will continue to pursue an earth-centered curriculum beyond the spring pillar. Volunteers from the Green Congregation Committee are encouraged to assist the teachers, to demonstrate to the children the wider commitment to the environment among the members of the congregation. (Done in April/May, 2008, with several adults from Green Congregation Committee assisting.)

RE-C-2. Channing RE children will continue a program initiated by Kim Shute last summer. The children will adopt a portion of the outdoor property and learn about its resident plants and animals as well as how to take care of it and how to keep it healthy. In this way, they begin to learn the process of stewardship with their environment. Other ideas include food production (with the possibility of a community garden providing food for the soup kitchen), composting and perhaps mentoring with gardeners in the Channing community.

Projects to initiate:

RE-I-1. Following on initial sustainability circle, ("Global Warming: Changing CO₂urse,") offer at least one Northwest Earth Institute discussion course, preferably one with a "Family" orientation. Also, offer this course to other congregations and environmental groups to broaden our outreach.

RE-I-2. Carpooling Initiative: Junior Youth Group will take on the task of mapping out the members' residences on a large-scale map of Aquidneck and Conanicut Island (which encompasses the four towns where most of our members live) in an attempt to encourage carpooling to church. It may also be possible to overlay the RI Public Transit Authority route map. This project has the dual objective of reducing gas consumption and carbon emissions and bringing the congregation together. What fun to have a visual representation of the places we live and to get to know our fellow church members a little better.

Projects to consider for future recertification:

RE-F-1. Hold fundraiser by selling reusable bags, possibly designed by RE students.

RE-F-2. Plan an intergenerational field trip to the Apeiron Institute for Sustainable Living's Camp Hamilton, in Coventry, RI.

EARTH JUSTICE

Don Mallinson, Beth Milham

Goals: To build awareness and work to heal environmental injustices, and to engage in community action on environmental justice issues

Initiated projects to continue:

EJ-C-1. Continue to support local and statewide advocacy groups, such as the George Wiley Center, in advocating for affordable housing options, health care and maximum heat and

utility assistance for low-income individuals and families, in recognition that they are still dependent on fossil fuel-based energy sources. Advocate for rates based on percentage of income, rather than flat rates, for low-income customers' utility bills, as press for inclusion of education and assistance in ways to lower their utility costs through weatherization and conservation practices.

EJ-C-2. Following on successful collaboration with Portsmouth United Methodist Church's Missions/Social Justice Committee to promote Step It Up/1-Sky activities, co-sponsor future activities, and actively engage other congregations in this collaborative effort, by working directly with other congregations and denominations, with outreach coordinator for RI Interfaith Power and Light and with Aquidneck Island Clergy Association.

EJ-C-3. Continue to offer the local foods potluck dinner each fall, and expand to offer an organic foods potluck dinner each spring. Potentially open these dinners to public and neighboring congregations in the future.

Projects to initiate:

EJ-I-1. Plan a jointly sponsored program with Step It Up (representing a coalition of the Missions/Social Concerns Committee of Portsmouth United Methodist Church and the Social Justice Committee/Green Congregation Committee) for Earth Day. The program consists of a series of DVDs about environment and energy, advertised to the public and shown weekly at a local coffee shop. Discussion follows. The DVDs chosen are designed to demonstrate the gravity of the situation we face, but also the steps we can take to change the potential outcome. (Done on the five Tuesdays in April, 2008. Attendance range was 17 to 49.)

EJ-I-2. Partner with organizations serving low income families, such as Church Community Housing Corporation, East Bay Community Action Program, Martin Luther King Community Center, and the Salvation Army, to develop a program for helping low-income homeowners and renters to make their homes more energy efficient, thereby lowering their costs for heat and utilities. This would include compiling simple "kits" to weatherize their quarters, literature with energy tips, and options for subsidized energy audits and installations. We anticipate developing a teen leadership program to deliver and assist in installing the kits, as well as reviewing the literature with the recipients. (Note: This proposal is receiving good support from the above named organizations, and we have applied for a small start-up grant for it, from the New England Grassroots Environment Fund. Notification will come approximately July 1, 2008.)

EJ-I-3. Encourage the Channing Governing Board to vote to enroll the church as a congregational member of the RI Chapter of Interfaith Power and Light. (Social Justice Committee, its chair and our minister joined in 2007.) This motion was made at the Governing Board meeting in March, and the Board will vote on it after an explanation to the congregation in the church's newsletter. (Vote to take place on June 11, 2008.)

Projects to consider for future recertification

EJ-F-1. Work collaboratively and progressively with the church's Endowment and Finance committees, the Board of Governors and the congregation to assess current investments and develop awareness and acceptance of socially and environmentally responsible options for the church's investments, with at least an initial partial transfer of funds (e.g. 1% of invested funds, to start.)

SUSTAINABLE LIVING

Craig Gaspard, Beth Milham

Goal: To encourage individual and collective choices for responsible lifestyle changes affecting the environment and energy

Initiated projects to continue:

SL-C-1. Continue "EcoBits and Tips" and "Green Corner" features in church's newsletter. (These features have appeared monthly since May, 2007. Samples of these features are included in our candidacy application.)

SL-C-2. Encourage continuing use of reusable (washable) dinnerware, or a policy of "bring your own dishes," for meals and receptions offered at the church. Use a minimum of disposable items, and be sure those used are the most environmentally friendly available.

SL-C-3. Complete the process of converting all incandescent lighting to CFL and LED in all Channing properties, including rentals.

SL-C-4. Maximize recycling in all spaces in church where refuse is collected. Make guidelines for recycling readily available, near all bins. (Coordinate with Religious Education program)

Projects to initiate:

SL-I-1. Follow up on the success of Northwest Earth Institute's "Global Warming: Changing CO₂urse" (offered in February/March, 2008) with their "Voluntary Simplicity" program. Continue to offer additional curricula, from either NWEI or other mutually agreed-upon sources. Coordinate schedules to avoid conflicts with Small Group Ministry and the NWEI course that RE plans to sponsor.

SL-I-2. Invite representatives of Newport Biodiesel (cooking oil biodiesel) to address the Property Committee, and possibly the Board of Governors, and encourage the church to contract with the company for heating fuel for the coming heating season. (The meeting was held on April 17, 2008, and the church has signed a contract with Newport BioDiesel.)

SL-I-3. Work with office manager and sexton to choose the most environmentally friendly products available for printing and cleaning (e.g. paper with high post-consumer recycled content and low bleaching, and biodegradable or natural cleaning products. Consult the master gardeners and students and other accomplished gardeners in the congregation for optimally "green" landscaping plans, including native plantings, and minimal water, fertilizer and pesticide dependency. (Collaborate with RE and Worship on this project.)

SL-I-4. Constitute Green Congregation Committee as a standing committee, with Board of Governor representation. Coordinate with committee revisiting church governance, upon approval of strategic plan.

SL-I-5. Share results of congregational sustainable living survey with congregation through church's newsletter and other outlets in a "metered" and entertaining way, to encourage congregants to follow survey participants' lead. Include information on which strategies included afford the "biggest bang for the buck." Develop a strategy for encouraging non-participants to adopt strategies, perhaps on the "Cool Congregations" model. Publicize

energy (utility bill) savings realized through above efforts through newsletter and service announcements. (First articles on survey in May and August issues.)

SL-I-6. Set up a collection station for burned-out CFLs, making provisions to prevent breakage, and deliver them to one of the annual hazardous waste collections held in a community on Aquidneck Island. Publicize the program in *The Catalyst* (newsletter) and in weekly announcements, and on Social Justice Bulletin Board.

SL-I-7. Co-sponsor the Aquidneck Island Energy Conference, a collaborative effort of Channing Memorial Church, Aquidneck Island Planning Commission, and Salve Regina University, on September 20, 2008, at Salve Regina University, Newport.

Projects to consider for future recertification:

SL-F-1. Study RISE energy audit for building improvements, beginning first with the least costly/most cost effective options for building improvements, and moving to more expensive options as rising energy prices make them more cost effective. Stay in communication with Strategic Planning Committee and Capital Fund Campaign Committee to be sure that recommended improvements are included in their plans and grant applications.

SL-F-2. Encourage Board of Governors to approve at least partial investment in National Grid alternate energy options, such as People's Power and Light or Community Energy. (Submit for consideration after income is realized from partnership program with PP&L)

SL-F-3. Recruit a team of volunteers to equip (or assist in equipping) willing members' homes, perhaps beginning with elderly members, with energy saving devices, such as CFLs, hot water heater insulation, duct insulation, and window/ door/electrical outlet draft reduction items.

SL-F-4. Research the feasibility of alternate forms of energy, such as geothermal. (One meeting was held with a vendor, spring, 2008.)

SL-F-5. Consider redesigning the cupola on the sanctuary roof to support a vertical axis wind generator to generate electricity for the sanctuary.