



Green Sanctuary

Annual Report June 5, 2022

Green Sanctuary Team Members who attended meetings/work sessions/films in FY21/22 include – Dick Berndt, Diane Gibbons, Julie Williams, Harvey Johnson, Linda Lobik, Jim Fuller, Jeff Green, Leanne Thomas, Gloria Weberg, Charles Long, Dorothy Long. Thank you. All BUUF members or friends are encouraged to attend meetings, work sessions and otherwise provide ideas for becoming and sustaining a Green Sanctuary. Quarterly ZOOM meetings were performed in July 2021 and January and April 2022. Most communications happened by word of mouth, text and email. We will aim for quarterly meetings and work projects in FY22/23.

History - At the 2015 annual meeting it was decided to begin the quest to become a Green Sanctuary. The kickoff project was a 6 KV Solar Electric system to generate the majority of our electricity. The Solar Electric system has been making about 80% of our annual electricity since installation by converting solar energy (photons) into electrical energy (electrons). Therefore, we are using an infinite source of energy instead of non-renewable energy sources such as natural gas, coal, and uranium. The four elements of being a Green Sanctuary involve Sustainable Living, Environmental Justice, Worship & Celebration, and Religious Education. Assessments of the four elements were made by team members, action plans were developed, and some have been implemented. Beginning in 2020 the UUA Green Sanctuary goal changed to focus primarily on joining others in climate action and justice.

Application - An application for Green Sanctuary candidacy was written by the committee and submitted May 31, 2017 to the Unitarian Universalist Association for review and comments. The application is on the BUUF website (berrienuu.org).

The GS application was reviewed at UUA by Green Sanctuary Manager Rev. Karen Brammer at kbrammer@uua.org. On July 31, 2017 the BUUF Green Sanctuary Application was affirmed and **BUUF is now a Green Sanctuary Candidate**. This means that we are on the right track to becoming a UUA designated Green Sanctuary. The final step to be designated a UUA Green Sanctuary is for us to document all our activities and submit them to UUA. Harvey has been meaning to do this for some time. It was his goal to make the Green Sanctuary submission this year, but it did not happen. Submitting the report remains the goal for the upcoming year.

Sustainable Living

The Solar Electric system continues to generate approximately 80% of our needed electricity since the October 2015 installation. This solar system has resulted in BUUF NOT generating tons of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) greenhouse gas.

An Electric lawn mower has been used to cut the BUUF grass for six summers and continuing into this growing season. The 56-volt battery is mostly charged with the electricity that we are generating. The idea is to reduce the Carbon footprint of BUUF. Volunteers have been recruited for the season and have been cutting grass for weeks. Please let us know if you are willing to give 1 hour per month. It can be whenever is convenient with the volunteer. Building key code can be shared.

We have reduced the area of lawn by adding Redbud tree volunteers and wood chips in the Redbud grove. An additional 100 SF of lawn area at the V of the driveway was converted to a perennial pollinator garden and bulb plants. Native plants such as Helianthus have been grown in the raised beds and were transplanted to the new V garden.

Suggestions are always welcome for other sustainable living, gardening and lawn maintenance ideas. Please bring them to a meeting or talk to a Green Sanctuary member (is that you?).

Environmental Justice

An Environmental Justice Film Series presented a monthly film each 3rd Thursday starting in fall 2016. After the film, a discussion followed on the Stewardship actions that we can take to reduce or impact on our shared home, PLANET EARTH. The monthly films ceased in March 2020 due to COVID-19. The film series continued on July 15, 2021 with *Kiss The Ground*. Beyond Climate was shown April 21, 2022, following an Ethical Eating potluck dinner. An Ethical eating group led by Diane Gibbons was formed in the past year to focus on ethical ways of eating and to educate BUUF members on eating that is healthy for people and the planet.

The BUUF Green Sanctuary Team has agreed to again partner during summer 2022 with the Fresh Start Children's Garden led by Emma Kinnard. The garden is located at the corner of May and Pearl Streets in Benton Harbor (1104 May St). Future work sessions will happen on Saturday mornings. Volunteers are welcome to help at the garden on Saturday mornings from 10am to 12pm. Help is with fence building, planting, weeding and child mentoring on gardening and food. Further notifications will be made on work times via the weekly Announcements, website and Sunday Services.

Worship Services

Approximately 20% of our Sunday Services were focused on Green Sanctuary topics of Sustainability, Earth based wisdom or Environmental Justice. This will continue.

Religious Education

Green Sanctuary topics of Sustainability, Earth-based wisdom or Environmental Justice continue to be incorporated into the children RE programs. This will continue in the coming year.

A Green Sanctuary 5 – year plan and goals was submitted to the board as part of the BUUF recent 5 – year plan.

For more information talk to Harvey Johnson 269-470-1470 johnsonh4@michigan.gov or co-chair Diane Gibbons gmad50@comcast.net.