

Green Sanctuary Committee

Annual Report 2024/2025

The mission of FUUSM's Green Sanctuary Committee is: "To guide and encourage FUUSM and the wider community to live our Seventh Principle and achieve our vision of a sustainable and just world for all." Co-chairs are Dawn Hewitt, Debra Miller, and Jim Grecni, and active members during the past year include Adeline Bailey, Mike Bailey, George Banziger, Vic Elam, Susan Henderson, Chris Jacobs, Kelcey Jacobs, Mark Krivchenia, Scott Lacey, Ginnie McNeil, Rebecca Phillips, and Cindy Taylor.

We met 12 times during the past year, with each meeting available in person and via Zoom. We are a hard-working group, and continue to do most of the things we have long done, including participating in Earth Day Marietta and Harmar Days; running a Sunday service during Earth Month (April); overseeing recycling in the FUUSM kitchen; encouraging sustainable practices during coffee hour and at group meals, screening environmental-themed films, hosting Sustainable Suppers, sweeping the River Trail twice each month; and also bringing environmental issues to the awareness of our full congregation. Current issues we're paying attention to include oil and gas development under and adjacent to Ohio's public lands, the flow of radioactive brine into injection wells in Washington County, the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy, ecological restoration, and climate change in general. We continue to work with other groups, including Mid-Ohio Valley Climate Action, Citizen's Climate Lobby, Save Ohio Parks, Friends of the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge, ReImagine Appalachia, and Faith Communities Together for a Sustainable Future, also known as FaCT Ohio. Many CGS members are involved in these and other environmental groups, to the benefit of us all. Several GSC members contribute "Climate Corner" op-eds in the Marietta Times and Parkersburg News Sentinel.

In April 2024, the GSC presented the Earth Week service, titled "What Can One Person Do?" and staffed a booth at Earth Day Marietta, where we handed out native wildflower seeds. We screened the film *Common Ground*, about regenerative agriculture, and special guests, farmers Eric and Kayla Gibson of Sugar Butte Farm, attended and joined in a discussion after the film. Some of us planted trees on Buckley Island in honor of Earth Day.

The solar charging bench along the River Trail was flooded twice, rendering it inoperable. We and the city have agreed to relocate it to higher ground—the city dog park, and Jay Warmke has agreed to see what it will take to repair it, and do the job. The GSC will foot the bill for the repair. We have kept community event calendars and information on the sign display up-to-date throughout the year.

Rebecca and others faithfully weeded and tended to the pollinator plot until Mainstreet Marietta agreed to assume responsibility for its maintenance and upkeep, and agreed to having a member of the GSC attend meetings related to the plot.

Initiatives in the past year included,

- In September, we conducted a two-day Climate Justice Revival, which is a nationwide effort by the UUA's Ministry for Earth, including leading the Sunday service that weekend. The events were well-attended, and 30-some attendees, many of whom are not active with the Green Sanctuary Committee, participated with enthusiasm, envisioning the local community and the world as they want it to be in the future.
- In January, we started a monthly Hour of Environmental Action in order to spur effective response to local, state, national, and global environmental issues. Speakers included someone from ReImagine Appalachia; the Ohio River Valley Institute, climate researcher Zena Grecni; and George Banziger fracking waste.
- In March, with co-sponsorship from MOVCA, we hosted two screenings of the Climate Future film festival. The films were engaging and provoking, and ranged from tragic to darkly comic. Discussions after both screenings were entirely positive, and we were encouraged to host future Climate Future film festivals.