

## **Agenda Natural Step Ministry Team/Environmental Care Team**

**Sunday, June 19, 2016 3:30 – 5 p.m. Room 106b (Round Table Room)**

**Attending:** Robin Comforto, Rebecca Marti, Karen Bloom, Marge Stevens

Absent members, send minutes to: Valerie White, Ann Bateman, Leslie Chartier, Marian Veley, LoErna Simpson, Rev. Barbara Nixon, Corinne Butzin, Bev Park, Sara Power, Kris Graves, Matt Gregory (FUMC web master)

**Edible Garden Project** – Karen – the harvest of 29 lbs of produce so far this year was announced as a celebration during prayers at church this morning. Sunday school students are helping with the garden. Watch for photos on the church's social media. Watering and weeding are going well with volunteers and the Work Unlimited crew does well at regular watering. Karen will request reimbursement for supplies from the Carolyn Raab grant.

**Update on Blue Sky funding** – the fund received \$510 in donations from recent special appeals. Bob Lewis of church council responded to the Natural Step input from April. He indicated that the finance ministry team will continue to monitor the Blue Sky program and ensure the number of shares is consistent with the donations for that purpose. The 2017 budgeting will occur in the fall when our request to place Blue Sky into the general utility budget will be considered.

Discussion: \* Rebecca suggested making personal contacts with supportive people to make monthly pledges to Blue Sky.

- Questions arose: Has the number of participation shares in Blue Sky changed? Have the church expenditures for electric and water utilities been reduced as a result of conservation efforts? How will the Natural Step representation be ensured at the 2017 budgeting meetings? **Marge** will contact the business manager and pastor and facilities manager with these questions.

**LED lightbulbs distribution** – the city of Corvallis and the Environmental Center procured 30,000 LED lightbulbs to be distributed to every household in Corvallis. One of the distribution pathways is to be churches. We discussed mechanisms through which to distribute LEDs to people of our church. Ideas included: at church meetings, at suppers, at Family Table meals, in the lounge after coffee hour, and more ideas can be pursued. **Marge** will contact Kim to find out how many bulbs we would expect to distribute during Sunday services, will contact Barbara and Beverly about dates and logistics and will write an article for the church newsletter.

Rebecca raised a question about the advisability of removing a working bulb and replacing it with an LED versus waiting for the bulb to wear out before replacing it. Answer: while there is some embedded energy value in the old (especially incandescent) bulbs, the amount of electricity saved significantly offsets that, especially over the long lifetime of the LED bulb. Older bulbs can be saved and used in fixtures that are rarely used. LEDs should be placed in most frequently used fixtures first. For Pacific Power users in Corvallis, about 67% of the electricity is produced in coal fired plants in Utah and Wyoming. This is very dirty energy, and all efforts to reduce the use of it makes a big difference in greenhouse gas emissions.

**Water Bottle project** – Rebecca reported she has been doing research with three vendors for prices and features. Symbol to be new logo appearing on Sunday bulletins. Wording: We discussed bottle size, shape, closure/spout type and material. Those present preferred a screw top bottle with no straw (hard to clean), 16 - 20 oz size, one color bottle and one color printing. Local business preferred. Wording "First United Methodist Church, Corvallis Oregon, Caring for Creation" Bottles to be distributed as gifts to new members, and sold at specially designated Sundays following worship and in the church store. Purchased with football parking sales savings, to be replenished by sales income. Given these suggestions, Rebecca will consult other members of the Natural Step Ministry/Environmental Care team and will continue working on the project with the church business manager, financial secretary, congregational life, and pastor.

**Sustainability Coalition Quarterly Gathering** – Rebecca reported on the meeting held April 26. Presentations were made by Peak Sports, Thyme Garden, and our own Pat Smythe on the OSU Folk Club Thrift Shop. Representatives from the Health and Human Services Action Team presented information on a Green Cleaning campaign. Progress on the Georgetown University Energy Prize shows Corvallis in the top ten cities.

**Budget Report** – there is \$908 in our reserve fund, earmarked for several projects: edible garden, water bottles, MissionU tuition, etc.

**Earth Day LBCC** – Valerie submitted a written report about the Earth Day Tabling at LBCC. If anyone else wants to do it, it does include a reduced price lunch in the Quad. Students were free. It was a tasty lunch! So, we had the barrel to collect flip-flop and athletic shoes there from the Albany First United Methodist Church. Most students/faculty who donated did it ahead of time—we had one faculty member who collected them in her office for us. For others who didn't remember, we let them know where they could drop off old and unusable sneakers and flip-flops—mostly by referring to the "Unusual Recyclables" brochure that had been recently updated. Lots of folks were happy to get this brochure and be made aware of places they could take unusual items they didn't want to add to the waste stream. Mostly we had one on one conversations with students and staff which were all productive in one way or another. Lots of sharing of knowledge and ideas. One student let us know of the many ways she was using Borax instead of many different laundry products. There was nominally always at least one person there from both the Albany and Corvallis church, so we got to visit with each other that way as well. The Earth Fair is only done one day a year, and just during the lunch time, so it is a nice short time commitment.

**Litter Patrol** –Scottie and two youth and one parent and Marge did litter pick up on April 30. They anticipate following up with another pick up in the fall.

**Clothing Swap:** June 4 was the third clothing swap, another successful event. This is slated to become a regular quarterly event. This brings many families with small children to our community center.

**Church Council reply** from Bob Lewis –

Thank you for this summary. It was a helpful addition to the conversation about the various ministry teams currently operating in the church. Regarding some of the specific items you mentioned –

1) Signage. There was a general agreement that the Community Center should have additional signage connecting it to FUMC. There are a number of other signs being planned for the grounds, and the property ministry team will incorporate your request into their planning.

2) FUMC's participation in the Blue Sky program. For 2016 the finance ministry team will continue to monitor the contributions designated for the Blue Sky program and ensure that the number of purchased Blue Sky shares is consistent with the money donated for that purpose. For 2017, the consideration of having Blue Sky certificates purchased out of the general fund will be discussed when we do the overall budgeting for the church. As you know, this typically takes place in the Fall.

I'd also like to point out that there was general agreement with you regarding the other changes FUMC is making to reduce its carbon footprint. Some of these examples include the increased use of LED lighting, the remodeled Martha Room with natural gas fireplace and insulation, and the improved landscaping of the church grounds. These are all good steps consistent with your team's and the church's commitment to the environment.

Again, thank you for the updates regarding the work of the Environmental Care team. We are noticing that a number of the Faith in Action teams are creating significant partnerships with the wider community, and we appreciate your ongoing dedicated work. Sincerely, Bob

**MissionU** – Marge and Rebecca are registered to attend the United Methodist Women’s study weekend from July 7 – 10. Study topics include “Climate Justice, A Call to Hope and Action”, “The Bible and Human Sexuality, Claiming God’s Good Gift” and “Latin America, People and Faith”. We will each choose two topics to study, and will bring the information back to our local congregation to share.

**Interfaith event**, May 25 – Rebecca represented FUMC Natural Step/Environmental Care team at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Interfaith gathering with guests Rabbis Waskow and Berman. Karen also attended. They reported it was about sacred life of the planet. Many people visiting our booth appreciated the updated Unusual Recyclables flyers.

**Spiritual event** – Karen attended an event at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship on spirituality and care for creation. She reflected on the meaningful practice of reflection and grounding in the sacred as we do our work. She offered to serve as chaplain (along with Barbara and/or Leslie) for our group, and provided a prayer to close our meeting.

**Solar Panel Project** - future - with Jim Swinyard

**Upcoming events:**

Local food harvesting – Karen and Corinne - ongoing

Sunday, August 21, 3:30 (or possibly earlier) room 106b, Natural Step/Environmental Care meeting