



Green Sanctuary
The Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth
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Application for Green Sanctuary Candidacy

Congregation Name	Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society
Address	2010 Whenona Dr. Madison WI 53711-4843
Web site	Prairie U.U. - uuprairie.org Green Committee - uuprairie.org/green
Green Sanctuary contact	Kathy Converse
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Minister or Congregation Leader	Consulting Minister – Rev. Ralph Tyksinski revralph341@yahoo.com President – Rachel Long raarlong@gmail.com

Application Instructions

Using this format, submit your electronic application in MSWord format to greensanctuary@uuministryforearth.org. If you cannot email the application, please contact Rev. Katherine Jesch for snail-mail instructions.

There is a \$100.00 application fee which you may submit either by check or credit card. Mail your check to the address at the top of this application, clearly indicating it is your Green Sanctuary application fee. To use a credit card, go to our website at <http://uuministryforearth.org/orderform.html> to purchase a congregational membership. As you click through the ordering process, there is a space at the end for comments. **CLEARLY** indicate in this space that your order is for your Green Sanctuary application and include your congregation's name!

For additional information and advice for preparing your application, feel free to contact Katherine at (503) 595-9392, or Katherine.Jesch@uuministryforearth.org.

I. Congregation Profile

The Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society was established in 1967 as an offshoot of the First Unitarian Society of Madison, WI, in an effort to relieve overcrowding in First Unitarian's religious education program. In September 1967, 30 adults and 78 children began meeting for religious education classes and adult services at a Catholic seminary on Madison's far west side--the first of a series of rented locations. We are now a congregation of just over 100 members with our own building on the southwest side of Madison. Our congregation has been actively lay-led since its founding and has had a half-time consulting minister for 3 years. The average age of our members has been increasing but newer members include younger families and adults.

Our congregation's programs and activities have long been oriented toward celebrating, understanding, and supporting the interdependent web of life. In our founding Bond of Union (covenant with each other) we state that "We would stand tall in our quest for integrity of life, yet not at others' expense. As the prairie stretches out until it becomes one with the sky, let us reach out to touch and be one with the natural world, and with one another." With this application for candidacy we propose actions that will add to our many ongoing programs and services oriented toward celebrating and sustaining the environment. Some of these ongoing activities are noted in our action plan.

Mission Statement of Prairie UU Society:

Prairie is a diverse, lay-led congregation. We aspire to be both open-hearted and open-minded. We welcome all who enter our doors with any combination of strengths and weaknesses, beliefs and doubts. Our small size allows us to be like an extended family: we aspire to support one another and nurture the growth of each of our members. By sharing joys and sorrows, we keep each other company on the journey through life. We seek to learn with and from each other in an atmosphere that respects diverse ideas, lifestyles, cultures, and wisdom traditions. Our shared values include respect for all forms of life and stewardship of the environment. Helping our youth to understand and appreciate these values is part of our mission. We seek to promote dignity, worth, and justice for people worldwide by supporting individual and collective social action.

Note – In our plan we often refer to Prairie UU Society as "Prairie" e.g. Prairie members, or Prairie activities.

II. The Green Committee

Green Committee Charter

Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society Madison, Wisconsin, October 2008

Mission statement: To recognize and support congregational and personal commitments to the environment; to plan activities that involve all members and friends of Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society (PUU) and the wider community in new positive environmental activities; and achieve Green Sanctuary (GS) accreditation through the Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth. As stated in our PUU Bond of Union: “As the prairie stretches out until it becomes one with the sky, let us reach out to touch and be one with the natural world, and with one another”.

Structure: The Green Committee will have representatives from PUU standing committees, members at large, and the Board. The Green Committee will select members to serve as a steering committee, which in turn, will appoint rotating conveners for the Green Committee and a liaison to the PUU Board. This Green Committee was approved by the Board on September 21, 2008.

Communication: Minutes will be taken at each meeting. Committee reports will be given to the PUU Board. A Green Page will be incorporated into the PUU Web site and committee minutes, status reports, educational materials, and other communications will be posted on this Web page. When appropriate, the Prairienews (Yahoo) list serve will also be used for communications.

Meeting Schedule: The committee will meet 1-2 times per month during the accreditation period. Sub-committees and work groups will meet on an ad hoc basis.

Membership: Membership is open to all PUU members and friends.

Prairie UU Resolution

Approved by membership vote at the November 9, 2008 Parish meeting.

Whereas the Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth, an independent affiliate organization of the Unitarian Universalist (UU) Association, now managed by the UUA, has established a “Green Sanctuary” accreditation program which invites congregations to:

- Increase awareness of societal environmental issues among UUs.
- Generate commitment for personal lifestyle changes.
- Motivate UUs to community action on environmental issues.
- Bridge a connection between spiritual practice and environmental consciousness.
- Build awareness of and rectify environmental injustices. And,

Whereas the Prairie UU Society Board has established a Green Committee that has prepared a project charter, begun an environmental assessment process, and is developing an Action Plan with the intention to request Prairie UU society approval to seek “Green Sanctuary” accreditation.

Whereas the Green Sanctuary Program requires the three following congregational votes to achieve accreditation:

1. Affirm the need to conduct base-line environmental assessments and develop an Action Plan leading to an application as a candidate for accreditation.
2. Adopt the Action Plan and authorize the application.
3. Authorize the application for “Green Sanctuary” accreditation after completing all projects in the action plan, usually after a period of one to two years.

Therefore, be it resolved that Prairie UU Society will work toward “Green Sanctuary” accreditation and will participate in and support the Green Committee as it completes base-line environmental assessments and develops and completes the Action Plan.

Committee members

Amy Armstrong	Member of the Finance Committee / interests – native plants, master gardening, wetland management, and energy conservation
Bob Cape	Interests – energy conservation and invasive plant control
Kathy Converse	Chair of the Social Action Committee / interests – natural resource management and wildlife biology
Randy Converse	Trained as an energy auditor and in ethical investments
Al Nettleton	Chair of the Housing and Property Committee / interests - building management, communications, technology
Bob Park	Chair of the Communications Committee / interests – air pollution, radio /Web communication
Barb Park	Chair of the Finance Committee / interest – master gardener
Ken Skog	Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee / interests – energy conservation, climate change
Dave Johnson	Interest – sustainable tree farming
Marsha Johnson	Interest – sustainable tree farming
Karen Deaton	Interests – master gardener, community garden organizing
Galen Smith	Member of the Housing and Property Committee and the Program Committee, Liaison to the Program Committee – interests – botany especially wetland plants and prairie ecology

III. Environmental Assessment

Briefly describe the process you used for the assessment. Summarize the major findings and include recommendations for possible responses. Recommendations may feed into the Action Plan, or may be longer term and not necessarily expected to be completed within the time frame of your candidacy. Your summary should be about 2 to 5 pages, depending on the complexity appropriate to your situation. It's not necessary to include all the technical details of your findings.

Personal Assessment of member practices based on a survey of Prairie members and friends

Major findings

1. Reducing Solid Waste - Prairie UU members are doing well in this category. Most of the members live in the city of Madison (WI.), which has a municipal recycling program. The members will be encouraged to continue their above average effort to reduce solid waste.
2. Reducing Energy Waste: Transport -The highest levels of participation in this category were planning errands to minimize the number of trips and by parking in a central location and walking when shopping. Members will be encouraged to increase carpooling for social trips and encourage replacement of any present vehicles with higher mileage ones.
3. Reducing Energy Waste at Home - There is an amazing 75% participation in the following areas: replacing incandescent lights with fluorescents, turning off lights when not in use, reducing hot water temperatures to 120F, and replacing used appliances with Energy Star ones. Members want to learn more about: putting timers on hot water heaters, insulating heating ducts, and installing Solar PVs, hot water panels, and passive solar measures. They want to try: having energy audits done on their homes, putting insulating blankets on hot water heaters, and insulating hot water pipes.
4. Conserving Water - The members are making their best efforts in: use of low flow shower heads, taking short showers, and at the end of a washing machine's life, replacing it with an Energy Star front loader. Members want to learn more about dual choice flush toilets, planting native plants, and creating "rain gardens". Members want to try: collecting rainwater for outdoor gardens, replacing spray system

with drip one in our outdoor gardens, and if remodeling replacing central hot water heaters with on-demand ones.

5. Reducing Use of Harmful Substances- Members are highly involved in eliminating all non-organic fertilizers and minimizing all fertilizers to reduce run off to the lakes, placing compost piles where contents are not washed into the watershed, recycling electronic products, using water-based paints, and properly disposing of toxic paints and other substances. Members will be encouraged to remain committed to their work in this category.

6. Better Shopping Choices - Members had the highest levels of participation in: taking bags for reuse when shopping, substituting whole foods for processed ones, and substituting unpackaged foods for over-packaged ones. The two most popular actions members want to try are: eating more organic foods and buying more local food (i.e. grown 150 miles or less from Madison).

7. Earth Justice - Members are: avoiding businesses that violate fair labor practices, avoiding businesses with a record of harm to the environment, and favoring businesses that pay their employees a fair wage. Members would like more information on how to avoid businesses that give inadequate attention to worker safety.

IV. Congregational Assessment

Prairie Society has owned the present meeting house for about thirty years. During that time the congregation invested in exterior wall insulation, completed a significant remodeling of the building, has replaced the hot water boiler with a more efficient system, has replaced many windows, and has planted several gardens, shrubs and trees. The members of the Green Committee subgroup on the congregational assessment conducted a walk-through of the building and a representative of the utility company conducted a building assessment. Several significant areas where improvements could be made were identified:

1. Electrical Usage – Most lights have compact florescent bulbs or long florescent bulbs but the latter fixtures use old magnetic ballasts. Also, lights are frequently left on when the building is unoccupied. The refrigerator is also over thirty years old. Upgrade of light fixtures, measuring electrical use of equipment, and replacing old appliances could return savings. The Society also needs to improve building check-out procedures to ensure that lights are turned out when the last person leaves the building.

2. Natural Gas Usage - The boilers are less than ten years old and have environmental sensing to control output, and computer controlled setback thermostats are installed. The water heater is quite old. Frequently the heat control program is not set in advance for meetings and/ the manual over-ride has been used without being reset at the end of building use. Improvements can be made in the procedures for managing heat and building check-out . Some heating pipes need to be insulated.

3. Building Envelope - Air Infiltration and Insulation – The building has foam insulation and stucco on all exterior walls and triple- or double pane windows are installed on the main floor. However basement windows are single pane and in very poor shape; there are known gaps in weather stripping; and attic insulation may be substandard in some areas.

4. Grounds – A native prairie garden in front of the building ; the north side of the building has a shade garden; and there is a rock garden along the basement entry sidewalk. There also is a small RE vegetable garden in the rear of the building within a fenced yard. Four-cycle power equipment is used for lawn mowing, trimming, and snow removal. The current prairie garden is dominated by switch grass, has low species diversity and could be restored. There also is a very low area next to the building that receives roof run-off and has poor drainage and is a candidate area for a rain garden.

5. Building Management – In general the Congregation uses socially and environmentally sensitive approaches to selecting supplies and cleaning products. Fair trade coffee and chocolate are served exclusively. Garbage quantity is very low and recyclable items are separated for city pick-up. However, inappropriate products are used occasionally used. A written guideline or policy with criteria for selecting products would be useful.

V. Action Plan

The following activities were selected by the Green Committee to fulfill requirements for the application for Candidacy. The 12 selections were made following the completion and analysis of the Congregational and personal assessments and were based on the experience of members, existing programs, and educational needs of the congregation. For some projects we note lead coordinators will include Chairs of Prairie Committees who will be elected later in 2009 and will aid in completing projects through 2010.

Worship, spiritual practice, and/or church community celebration (2+ activities)

Project 1 – Provide Sunday services celebrating environmental awareness

Overview: Present a series of at least five Sunday Services that celebrate an environmental milestone or event, provide information for members on lessening their environmental footprint, environmental justice, or the importance of the seventh UU principle. Programs may include: 1) Earth Day, 2) Darwin Day, 3) solstice services, 4) creating a more energy efficient home [responding to interests expressed in the Personal Assessment], 5) making socially and environmentally sound investments, and 6) learning from the director of the My Lai Loan Fund.

Lead coordinator(s): **Kathy Converse**

Time line: September 2009 through June 2010

Target audience: Prairie members and friends

Project 2 – Provide a Sunday service on Community Supported Agriculture

Overview: Provide a Sunday service on Community Supported Agriculture in Southern Wisconsin and its benefits for farmers, consumers and the environment. Introduce new and non-participating members to this program and stress the benefits of eating seasonal organic foods and buying locally. This program will precede an annual CSA Spring Fair where members can meet and sign up with the CSA of their choice.

Lead coordinator(s): **Ken Skog, Barb Park**

Time line: Late Winter 2010

Target audience: Prairie member and friends

Project 3 – Provide a Sunday service on the Northwest Earth Institute Course on “Menu for the Future”

Overview: Following completion of an adult education course by the Northwest Earth Institute, titled “Menu for the Future,” course participants will present a service followed by a luncheon to emphasize how members can support sustainable food systems.

Lead coordinator(s): **Kathy Converse, Dave Johnson**

Time line: After completion of Project 4 below, by June 2010

Target audience: Prairie member and friends

Religious education programs (2+ activities)

Project 4 - Provide the Northwest Earth Institute course “Menu for the Future” – Adult lifelong learning

Overview: Members of PUU will coordinate a Northwest Institute course “Menu for the Future”, a six session course exploring the connection between food and sustainability. The goals of the course are to: 1) explore food systems and their impacts on culture, society and ecological systems; 2) gain insight into agricultural and individual practices that promote personal and ecological well-being, and 3) consider your role in creating or supporting sustainable food systems.

Lead coordinator(s): **Dave Johnson**

Time line: Fall 2009

Target audience: Prairie members and friends

Project 5 – Add books to our lending library that promote environmental awareness

Overview: The Green Committee will initiate the collection of books that cover philosophical and practical subjects concerning the environment and add them to Prairie UU’s existing lending library.

Lead coordinator(s): **Amy Armstrong, Kathy Converse, and Chair of the RE Committee**

Time line: September 2009 to May 2010

Target audience: Prairie members and friends

Project 6 - Create an urban/ suburban environment with native plants and wildlife – Youth Religious Education

Overview: The PUU has a large yard next to their building that is available for use by adult and child members and is accessible to the neighbors. We will help the children make landscaping changes as an educational tool on the importance of creating urban/suburban environments for native plants and wildlife. The program will be coordinated with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and National Wildlife Federation. We will assure that the children participate by holding their existing monthly RE spirit circles (preschool through grade 12) outdoors year round. The children will choose a small area of land or a plant to monitor in order to document any changes in the plant or area or use by wildlife during the four seasons. The children will keep a journal of their observations.

Prairie UU will continue our three decade tradition of a December workshop for children to make holiday decorations, cards and/or gifts from recycled and natural materials. We will add information with the projects to stress the importance of simplicity and recycling.

Lead coordinator(s): **Karen Deaton, Kathy Converse, RE Committee Chair**

Time line: September 2009 to June 2010

Target audience: Prairie youth

Environmental Justice (2+ activities)

Project 7 - Participate in the My Lai Peace Project (an on-going project involving a group in the broader Madison community)

Overview: PUU will contribute to the micro loan fund of the My Lai Peace Project sponsored by the Madison, WI Quakers. Since 1994, loan funds have been established in 17 Vietnamese villages. The Vietnamese businesses are modest energy consumers and produce goods used locally. Funds for the micro lending will be raised by selling crafts of “Chalate Arts”, a committee of the “Madison Arcatao Sister City Project” (MASCP) that engages in fair trade with cooperatives in Arcatao, San Salvador to provide cooperative artisans access to larger markets for environmentally friendly items. Items from the Chalate Arts will also be auctioned during the annual auction with proceeds to the My Lai Loan Fund

Lead coordinator(s): **Randy Converse, Barb Park**

Time line: September 2009 to June 2010

Target audience: Prairie members and friends

Project 8 – Invest Prairie funds in socially responsible/ green investments

Overview: The Finance Committee will review elements of green investing. It will work to develop and implement policies, in conjunction with the Society Board, to invest a percent of the Society’s savings according to good ethical investing practices, which reflect our values as a church, security for the principle, and provides a reasonable rate of return. The process and information gleaned during the process will be shared with members to encourage similar green investing.

Lead coordinator(s): **Randy Converse, and the Finance Committee Chair**

Time line: September 2009 through May 2010

Target audience: Prairie members and Board

Sustainable living (4+ activities)

Project 9 - Decrease energy consumption of the Prairie Meeting House

Overview: This activity builds on the ongoing commitment Prairie has had to reducing energy use for the meeting house, which has included insulation, boiler replacement, automated heat and exterior lighting timers, and light fixture replacement. Prairie will contract for a comprehensive energy efficiency audit. It will follow-through on the audit recommendations, acting on those that are most cost effective. We anticipate recommendations for some additional insulation, air and water infiltration mitigation, appliance replacement and efficient lighting upgrades. Budget requests may need to be made and approved for some of the upgrades.

This will be considered as a demonstration project. Specific costs, and benefits will be reported to the congregation. This activity will result in mostly invisible benefits and may even result in increased costs due to initial investment. Regular status reports will be provided to the congregation as a part of the Green Committee reporting, including the congregation’s Green Web pages.

Lead coordinator(s): **Al Nettleton**

Time Line: Complete by December 2010.

Target Audience: All Prairie members

Target Audience: all members of Prairie UU.

Status: Started.

Project 10 - Prairie Member Energy Challenge

Overview: Many Prairie members are making commitments to reduce their own energy footprint. Prairie will encourage and celebrate individual member successes through an organized energy challenge. This will include semi-annual auto tire pressure clinics, circulating an energy usage monitor, holding workshops, collecting data and celebrate significant accomplishments. Typical celebrations would be for purchase of a more energy efficient vehicle, conversion of a household to CFL or LED lighting, bicycle commuting, significant use of public transportation or insulating a home.

Lead coordinator(s): **Bob Cape**

Time Line: September 2009 to June 2010.

Target Audience: All members and friends of Prairie.

Status: Started

Project 11 - Explore Photovoltaic Installation on Prairie Meeting House

Overview: The Prairie Meeting House has a roof with excellent southern exposure and space for a photovoltaic installation of about 2KW. The Green Committee will explore the costs and benefits of an installation and make recommendations to the congregation. The exploration will also investigate the availability of grants or other incentives. The exploration process alone should be educational for the congregation, even if an installation is not completed.

Lead coordinator(s): **Al Nettleton**

Time Line: Complete study by Spring 2010 Prairie Parish meeting.

Target Audience: All members and friends of Prairie UU and the community at large.

Status: In development.

Project 12 – Restore our prairie garden and establish a rain garden

Overview: 1) About twenty five years ago Prairie UU planted a small prairie garden which is now mostly dominated by switch grass. In order to improve the biodiversity much of the switch grass needs to be removed and plants of other species introduced.. 2) A low lawn area is adjacent to the prairie and receives about one-half of the runoff from the roof. This provides an area for a wet prairie planting (rain garden) that should reduce run-off of water from the property and would add species to the present prairie garden. These two projects can be combined during member work days. Prairie UU members would be asked to contribute to the purchase of plants and to plant them according to a landscape plan. 3) Informational signs will be made and installed near the prairie garden. These signs will provide general information about the prairie garden and prairies in general as well as information (pictures and text) about particular species

Lead coordinator(s): **Galen Smith**

Time Line: Complete by June, 2010.

Target Audience: All members and friends of Prairie.

Status: In progress.

VI. Communications Plan

Sharing practical information about environmental issues and sustainable living strategies

- Share sustainable living tips and member success stories in the Prairie Fire. Offer to make audio recordings of member success stories for posting on the web site's Green Page. If such recordings are made, consider including audio links to them in related stories in the electronic Prairie Fire.
- Establish a "Green Resource Center" where pamphlets containing topical information regarding environmental issues and sustainable living strategies are made available. Call attention to this resource center in the Prairie Fire newsletter. The article should also mention the Green Links page on the Social Action Committee web site.
- If the DNR announces an air quality alert for our county, send recommendations on actions members can take or avoid taking until the alert is passed to PrairieNews email list as a Green Committee announcement.

Inviting participation in program activities

- Make the Green Sanctuary Action Plan available for comment from the congregation on the Green Page of Prairie's web site.
- Provide regular updates to the congregation in the Prairie Fire newsletter to track progress on the action plan, announce key initiatives, and ask for input and volunteers.
- Make minutes from the Green Committee meetings available on the web site's Green Page, and mention that availability in at least one Prairie Fire article.
- Announce at Sunday Services and/or via email in PrairieNews email list achievement of key milestones in the accreditation process.
- Wear a big green hat while making announcements on Sunday mornings about actions we are asking members to take.
- Include announcements of Green Committee meetings and special events in the Order of Service, Prairie Fire newsletter and the calendar on the Prairie UU Web site.
- Establish a Green Committee bulletin board with information on programs organized by or for the committee, committee meeting dates, and specific areas where volunteers are needed.
- Include information on the Green Sanctuary Accreditation Process in our annual Earth Day service in April.

Collaborating with other groups within and beyond our congregation

- Present progress reports to the Board.
- Advertise specific public events in the Guide section of Isthmus (weekly newspaper).
- Advertise special events to the other UU congregations in the area (Dane and adjacent counties).
- Utilize committee members' contacts with outside environmental organizations.
- Post current opportunities for local environmental activism on the Social Action Committee's Social Action Calendar on that committee's web site and bulletin board. This should include opportunities to submit public comment on key environmental issues when statutory changes are being considered by the State Legislature and when rule changes are being proposed by state agencies with environmental regulatory authority.