

Greetings Friends,

There is a new team at First Church focusing on environmental concerns. Our Environmental Group currently includes: Joan Goodell, Nancy McClellan, Bill Neil, Leendert Huisman, Doug Viehmann, Paul Bloomhardt and Bob McKearin. We want to share some of our aspirations, the work we're planning to do, and invite your thoughts and participation.

You may recall that the environmental visioning team focused on reducing the carbon footprint of our buildings. Our Trustees have approved two projects: tightening the building envelope and installing solar panels on the roof of the sanctuary. These projects are in the design/feasibility stages. Early reports suggest that both may be feasible, meaning they'll be effective at reducing our fossil fuel emissions and well worth the cost.

Looking beyond our Church, we will also focus and consider actions on significant environmental problem areas such as greenhouse gases, plastic pollution, pesticides and other issues. For example, we'll examine what can be done to reduce CO2 emissions from our cars and trucks, the most significant source of CO2 in Vermont.

And, we will be applying to become a Creation Justice Church in the United Church of Christ (UCC), one of the 8 [Just World Covenants](#) of the UCC. Our Open and Affirming status is one of these 8 covenantal programs. We also expect to collaborate on our shared goals with local faith communities and secular organizations.

For many in Vermont, the changes in our weather and climate are already hitting close to home, creating anxiety and feelings of helplessness. Often, the best antidote to that worry and anxiety is to do something about it! If we put our minds to it, we can do our part to protect and treat our environment as justice requires.

We welcome any and all to join us to share your perspective on climate change and the environment. Please contact any of us or email the Church Office at info@firstchurchburlington.org to learn more and/or to be notified – and invited to - an upcoming meeting of the Environmental Group.

Bob McKearin

On behalf of the Environmental Group

