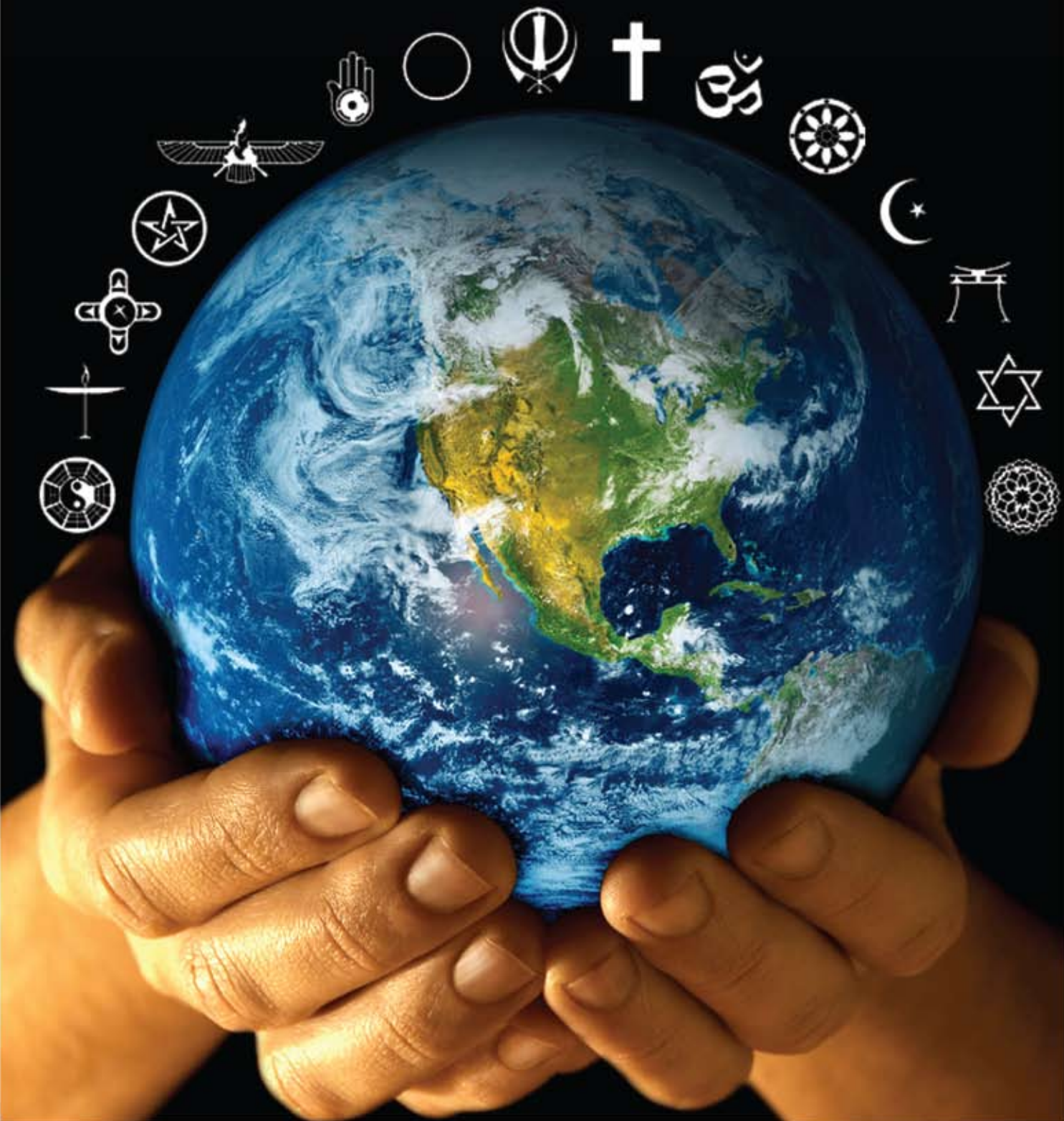


# Sacred Acts of Eating and Caring for Creation

INTRODUCING

## THOUGHTFUL, INTENTIONAL ACTIONS

*Initiated by Madison Area Faith Communities*



*M*any years ago in a graduate school seminar on the sociology of religion, the professor introduced a term — commensality — with which none of us students were familiar. He sighed, shook his head in disappointment and proceeded to fill this gap in our knowledge.

Commensality refers to “table fellowship” and derives from mensa, the Latin word for “table.” It describes the very ancient practice of common dining with all its familiar connotations of hospitality, sharing, celebrating, blessing and peaceful coexistence.

The custom of breaking bread together is deeply embedded in most of the world’s religions. One thinks of the Eucharist, a feast whereby relationships in those fractious early Christian communities were repaired and strengthened. Passover plays a central role in Jewish identity, providing historical perspective and instilling gratitude. During the holy month of Ramadan, Muslims are urged to share food with others and to break their fasting together.

Among the Native Americans of the Northwest, the potlatch developed as a means of equalizing wealth and ensuring a just society. Japanese Buddhists invented a highly stylized tea ceremony whereby a routine daily activity was rendered sacred by extra special care and attention.

Food still receives considerable emphasis in modern culture, but the focus has shifted. Now it’s all about speed, convenience and self-indulgence. Fewer and fewer people cook or even dine with the members of their own family. The busyness of our lives and the abundance provided by modern agriculture has made us blasé. We don’t pay attention and take too much for granted.

And then there is the whole matter of the origins of what we eat and our need to care for creation so we have sustainable sources of food far into the future. True reverence requires that our agricultural practices be based on sustainable principles. The cultivation of rice is a sacred art in some Eastern cultures and measures to preserve the earth’s fertility are mentioned in the Bible. Without comparable commitment, we stand to exhaust our land and water resources within just a few more generations.

As people of faith, we can do much to care for creation and foster healthful, ethical and mindful eating. Hopefully, some of the following programs, devised by a few forward-looking local faith communities will open your eyes to new possibilities.

— **Michael A. Schuler**, *Parish Minister*,  
The First Unitarian Society of Madison

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>AID FOR FARMERS</b>	
Harvest of Hope (Madison Christian Community) . . . . .	3
<b>ART &amp; FOOD</b>	
Community Arts Ministry (St. Mark's Lutheran Church) . . . . .	4
<b>COMMUNITY GARDENS</b>	
Food Pantry Garden (Bashford United Methodist Church) . . . . .	5
Garden Ministry (Madison Christian Community) . . . . .	6
Veggie Village (Orchard Ridge United Church of Christ) . . . . .	7
<b>COMMUNITY MEALS</b>	
Food Haulers (First Unitarian Society) . . . . .	8
Holiday Community Meals (First United Methodist Church) . . . . .	9
Intergenerational Tu B'shevat Seder (Shaarei Shamayim) . . . . .	10
Men's Homeless Shelter Monthly Meals (First United Methodist Church) . . . . .	11
<b>EDUCATION &amp; AWARENESS</b>	
Ethical Eats Task Force (First Unitarian Society) . . . . .	12
Feeding Faithfully Series (Grace Episcopal Church) . . . . .	13
Islamic Environmental Group of Wisconsin . . . . .	14
Peace, Social and Earth Concerns Committee (Madison Friends Meeting) . . . . .	15
Tales from Planet Earth (First United Methodist Church) . . . . .	16
<b>FARMERS' MARKETS</b>	
Sharing the Harvest (Unity of Madison Spiritual Community) . . . . .	17
Winter Farmers' Market and Brunch (St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Parish) . . . . .	18
<b>FOOD PANTRIES</b>	
Food Pantry (First United Methodist Church) . . . . .	19
Restorative Justice Program Food Pantry (Madison-Area Urban Ministry) . . . . .	20
<b>SUSTAINABILITY</b>	
Environmental Teams (Unity of Madison Spiritual Community) . . . . .	21
Green Team (Orchard Ridge United Church of Christ) . . . . .	22
Rain Garden (Covenant Presbyterian Church) . . . . .	23
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	
Alternative Transportation Sunday (Covenant Presbyterian Church) . . . . .	24
<b>FOOD, FAITH AND EARTH DAY RESOURCES</b> . . . . .	25



# MADISON CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

## Initiative/Project Name: Harvest of Hope Fund

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

We provide financial assistance and hope to Wisconsin farm families in difficult financial situations because of low commodity prices, escalating expenses, weather extremes (drought, floods, hail, frost) and shifting global markets. We believe family farms are in the best interest of farmers, consumers, communities and the environment. Our goal is to help Wisconsin family farmers get through difficult financial situations and stay in business.

### YEAR STARTED:

1986.

### MOTIVATION:

We organized a “pick and glean project” in January 1986 — the year snow was so deep farmers couldn’t get into their fields to pick corn with mechanical pickers — to help two Cottage Grove farmers obtain corn to feed their cattle. This project sensitized church members to the challenges facing farmers. We raised \$3,500 to help three Wisconsin farm families in 1986, and the project has gradually expanded since then.

### FREQUENCY:

This is an ongoing project.

### BENEFITS:

We’ve granted to Wisconsin farm families throughout the state 1,432 gifts totaling \$867,442 since January 1986. The money has addressed a range of difficult situations: electric power cut-offs, house/barn fires, medical/veterinary bills, crop failure, spring planting and simply putting food on the table or fuel in the tank.

### MEASURE OF SUCCESS:

Harvest of Hope has helped hundreds of Wisconsin farmers stay in business, has helped some exit farming with greater dignity and has prevented some farmers from committing suicide. Most important, it has given Wisconsin farm families hope... thus the name of the fund: Harvest of Hope.

### VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED:

Six volunteers serve on our board, raising funds for the project and disseminating funds to farm families in need. Other Madison Christian Community members help with special projects, including fundraising initiatives.

### BUDGET/SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Our congregation covers all administrative costs for the fund (less than \$800 per year), so every dollar raised goes directly to Wisconsin farm families in crisis situations. We seek pledges from our church members and have solicited funds from Willie Nelson’s Farm Aid Fund, other churches, foundations and corporations. And farmers who sell their produce at winter farmers’ markets offer 10% of their proceeds to the Harvest of Hope Fund. While giving has generally averaged \$30,000 per year, 2009 was a tough year for Wisconsin dairy farmers: We gave 104 gifts totaling \$74,712 in 2009 and had to scurry to solicit this level of funding!

### BIGGEST CHALLENGE:

There have been “dry spells” where we have come close to running out of funds, but with faith and work, we have always been able to find new sources to revitalize the fund.

### ADVICE FOR OTHERS:

Seek support wherever you can find it, and remember to thank/acknowledge people and groups contributing to the project.

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

Roger Williams  
608-839-4758  
rtwillia@wisc.edu



# ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

---

Initiative/Project Name:

## Community Arts Ministry

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

This ministry has involved the PromiseKids program and Backyard Mosaic Women's Project. On Wednesdays during the school year, PromiseKids offered a family-style meal and spirituality/arts program. Participants nurtured an organic garden in the summer; Oakhill Correctional Horticulture Program contributed the plants. This program produced many art projects — quilts, photographs, mosaics and weavings — displayed at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in South Madison.

Backyard Mosaic Women's Project is a support group and community service project, geared toward (but not exclusive to) women who are returning to their families and communities after incarceration. The women completed a mural/mosaic/garden at St. Mark's in 2009. They are considering a new project at St. John's Lutheran, off the Capitol Square.

### YEAR STARTED:

PromiseKids, 1994. Backyard Mosaic Women's Project, 2004.

### MOTIVATION:

PromiseKids began because neighborhood children needed a safe place to go and good food to eat after school. Backyard Mosaic started because previously incarcerated women need a safe place to re-enter their lives and an opportunity to give something back to the community.

### FREQUENCY:

PromiseKids, a weekly program, currently is inactive. Backyard Mosaic meetings are Wednesday mornings.

### BENEFITS:

The program benefits the participants, the volunteers and the communities that have so warmly welcomed them.

### MEASURE OF SUCCESS:

We meet the goals we set, provide creative support and service.

### VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED:

PromiseKids, 10. Backyard Mosaic, 10.

### BUDGET/SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Grants and donations.

### BIGGEST CHALLENGE:

Funding. PromiseKids is inactive partially because of lack of funds, and Backyard Mosaic's co-facilitators donate their time. The economy has greatly affected this project.

### ADVICE FOR OTHERS:

Dream big and work small.

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

Julia Weaver  
608-261-9755  
thejweaver@yahoo.com  
  
Pastor Mary Pharmer  
608-256-8463



# BASHFORD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

---



## Initiative/Project Name: Food Pantry Garden

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

Our church takes earth stewardship seriously and tends a garden that provides fresh, quality vegetables for the Bashford Food Pantry. Among the vegetables grown are green peas, green beans, radishes, lettuce, carrots, eggplant and zucchini. Recipes that highlight various fresh vegetables, including instructions on preparation and tasting, are printed weekly. The growing season ends with winter squash, pumpkins, collards and leeks being distributed. All end-of-week (excess) produce goes to the Rescue Mission on North Street.

### MOTIVATION:

Our desire to provide healthy food to our food pantry clients led us to planting the garden.

### FREQUENCY:

This is an ongoing project.

### BENEFITS:

Tending our own garden benefits our food pantry clients and also spiritually nourishes volunteers who tend the garden.

### MEASURE OF SUCCESS:

About 1,145 pounds of fresh food have been provided to recipients.

### VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED:

Ten volunteer gardeners planted, weeded and harvested throughout the growing season.

### BIGGEST CHALLENGE

The biggest disappointment was the loss of nearly all the tomato plants because of blight.

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

Rev. Brenda Wingfield  
608-249-9222  
[www.bashfordchurch.org](http://www.bashfordchurch.org)

### OTHER RELEVANT BASHFORD ACTIVITIES:

- **Bashford UMC Food Pantry**  
*Open 5 days a week. Over 7,700 people served annually.*
- **Food for the Homeless**  
*Meal served monthly at Grace Episcopal's shelter for the homeless.*
- **SHARE**  
*Space provided monthly for this food program.*
- **Hospitality**  
*"Buddy Church" for Interfaith Hospitality Network.*
- **Renewable Energy**  
*Green Business Partner with Madison Gas & Electric.*
- **Energy Efficiency**  
*Energy audit completed. High-efficiency boilers installed. Energy-saving measures in recent remodeling.*
- **Education**  
*Three-month earth stewardship series.*

# MADISON CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

---

Initiative/Project Name:

## Garden Ministry

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

We have a 9,000-square-foot garden plot. Our church members partner with elementary school children who attend a summer program at Lussier Community Education Center. In addition, youth from our congregation garden after worship on Sunday mornings.

### YEAR STARTED:

Our first year of gardening was 2003. The soil was like rock, and we didn't know what we were doing. We also were encouraged by glimpses of what we thought this ministry could be, so we agreed to try again in 2004.

### MOTIVATION:

The garden was inspired by serious theological reflection about God's gift of land, a sense of place, a congregation's call to reach out to others and, most important, the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

### FREQUENCY:

Gardening is a commitment that spans through three seasons. It starts with tilling the soil in the spring and concludes with harvest in the fall.

### BENEFITS:

All of the people who enter the garden benefit. Bridges are built between young and old and individuals from different racial, social and economic backgrounds. People who tend the garden experience the joy of harvesting the fruits of their labor. People who receive food benefit because of the nutrition. God benefits as people lift their joyful expressions of gratitude for all good things that come from the earth.

### MEASURE OF SUCCESS:

Success is not what is important. This ministry is a commitment to live out God's first calling to till and keep the earth and foster relationships with God, neighbor, nature and self.

### VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED:

God called Adam and Eve to till and keep the earth, but the size of the plot is a big variable. Over the course of a gardening season, there are at least 50 gardeners who participate in this ministry.

### BUDGET/SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Less than \$1,000 is needed annually. This ministry is funded by donations and the proceeds of Father Dom's Duck Doo.

### BIGGEST CHALLENGE:

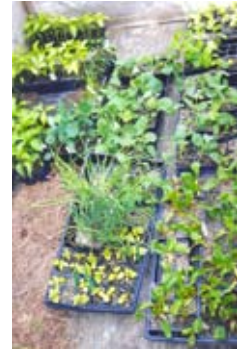
The gardener does not control the garden, but tends and nurtures the garden. This means that the gardener must learn the language of the garden.

### ADVICE TO OTHERS:

Start small and network with the garden community in the area.

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

Jeff Wild  
608-824-1761  
mccwild@chorus.net



# ORCHARD RIDGE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

---

*Initiative/Project Name:*

## Veggie Village: Faith and Food Grown Here

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

We have tilled a part of our church property to make gardens to grow food without using chemicals. One of 12 plots (each 12' x 12') was earmarked for the Sunday school children; gardeners paid a fee to grow food for their families on the other 11. Another 25' x 55' plot was reserved to grow food for the Lussier Food Pantry. The project involved a lot of initial preparation, such as development of garden policies, soil testing, grass tilling, fence building, making paths for walking, building a toolbox and buying hay for mulch.

### YEAR STARTED:

February 2009.

### MOTIVATION:

A Faith in Action work group, part of the Next Generation Initiative, expressed a desire to have a garden. A proposal was presented to the Leadership Team, which approved the plan.

### FREQUENCY:

This is an ongoing project. The Garden Committee meets throughout the spring and summer to coordinate activities.

### BENEFITS:

We delivered about 600 pounds of fresh food to the Lussier Food Pantry. Gardeners have the joy of watching their garden grow and putting organic food on their tables. Children spend Sunday mornings in the garden, planting, weeding and harvesting. Several times they brought their bounty to share with the congregation after Sunday worship.

### MEASURE OF SUCCESS:

It is a success because we are able to provide fresh food to the pantry. Gardeners develop friendships, share gardening tips and celebrate their successes with — what else? — potlucks. Non-gardeners from the congregation visit the garden often after church, just to see how things are growing. The fact that many gardeners expressed a desire to do this again indicates the project is a success.

### VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED:

Six to 10 volunteers work in the pantry plot. The gardening committee has six people.

### BUDGET/SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Total start-up cost was about \$700. Two church committees allocated money to purchase seeds and build the fence. Fees charged to gardeners who grew food for their own use were another source of income.

### BIGGEST CHALLENGE:

We had to dig up our potatoes and tomatoes in late summer due to blight. It made everyone very sad.

### ADVICE FOR OTHERS:

It is a very rewarding and energizing experience for all. Consult the Community Action Coalition, which was very helpful to us when starting our garden. Careful planning is necessary.

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

Sara Roberts  
608-273-1114  
sarie914@sbcglobal.net



# FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY

---

*Initiative/Project Name:*

## Food Haulers

### **BRIEF DESCRIPTION:**

The Food Haulers provide food and lunches for parish meetings and other congregational celebrations. We also have published a church cookbook. In addition to providing nourishing food before parish meetings and adding festivity to celebrations, we support our faith community's mission to be a force for good in the world by using fresh, homemade food with local ingredients (when we can) on dishes that are washed by our members (avoiding waste). We model the pleasure of working together while serving others and build community among the working group and those who are served. We inspire service to the church community and, in so doing, to the larger community as well.

### **YEAR STARTED:**

2006.

### **MOTIVATION:**

The congregation was embarking on a new building project with frequent informational meetings held at lunchtime after Sunday church services. There was no group within the church whose mission was to provide food and hospitality; the Food Haulers grew from this need.

The name "Food Haulers" comes from the tradition of doing for ourselves. In the early 1950s, congregants referred to themselves as "Stonehaulers" because they hauled stone from a quarry many miles away, so our Meeting House could be finished within budget.

### **FREQUENCY:**

The group serves about 10 times a year.

### **BENEFITS:**

Breaking bread together reminds us of our common humanity. We linger over conversations; we nourish our bonds as well as our bodies. We empower those who think they cannot cook or wash dishes for themselves; we welcome and teach all who are interested. We provide opportunities for those who love to bake and cook but live by themselves and have limited reason to do so. Our attendees feel welcomed and appreciated because they are served; those who are serving, in turn, are

glad for the opportunity to be helpful. Our community is a large one; we provide an easy way for both new and long-term members to meet others and work together.

### **MEASURE OF SUCCESS:**

It's a very successful group. We've grown from a small group of eight or so in 2006 to almost 60 members. There is more demand for our services than we are able to provide. Informal observations from many suggest that meetings are more successful when participants are well fed! Our cookbook sales have exceeded expectations — in part because the Food Haulers as a group are appreciated and trusted. Many like the ability to help out the church in a practical way — washing dishes, for example, or cooking together — in addition to or instead of ongoing committee work. We offer the opportunity to be engaged at whatever level of commitment the members of the group can manage.

### **VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED:**

For the average event, we have about 25 people: three planners, six bakers, five to prepare food, five to set up and serve and six to clean up.

### **BUDGET/SOURCE OF FUNDING:**

We do not have an annual budget; the source of funding is freewill donations for lunches and the hospitality budget of the church for celebrations, new member lunches and other official events.

### **BIGGEST CHALLENGE:**

The biggest challenge is developing a broader leadership group to plan events, mobilize the volunteers and determine an appropriate formal infrastructure for the group. Right now, the leadership is a self-appointed group of three who plan the menus, determine the quantities of food, shop, organize and lead the other volunteers. We'd like to expand the range of our service beyond our current 10 events per year but cannot do so with our current operational model.

### **ADVICE FOR OTHERS:**

Many faith communities already have functioning committees that provide food and



and hospitality. We've managed to include many of those who have traditionally not been involved — men and younger members, for example, or those who do not think of themselves as cooks. We look upon the effort as a chance to build community and connection as well as to serve food and try to be as welcoming as possible to beginners and others. We've tried to keep costs low while using locally sourced food whenever possible. We seldom use disposable plates or utensils and have introduced many to the art of washing dishes and finding their way around the kitchen.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Trudy Karlson  
608-233-4526  
trudy.karlson@gmail.com  
Emily Cusic  
608-358-6918  
ecusic@gmail.com  
Joan Heitman  
jaheitman@tds.net

# FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

---

## Initiative/Project Name: Holiday Community Meals



### BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

On Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter, our church sponsors a free community meal that includes free home delivery.

### YEAR STARTED:

1984.

### MOTIVATION:

Church members wished to provide a meal on special holidays for those who were alone or homebound.

### FREQUENCY:

Recurring (on the three major holidays).

### BENEFITS:

This project helps community members who desire to be with others in fellowship on holidays and those who cannot leave their homes and otherwise would be without a holiday meal.

### MEASURE OF SUCCESS:

In 2009, for the three holidays, we delivered 890 meals and served nearly 900 people in the church fellowship hall. We consider this a great success.

### VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED:

About 80 to 100 volunteers (from the church and community-at-large) are needed at each meal, including an overall coordinator and three other coordinators (kitchen, dining room and volunteers). In addition, 50-60 church members donate money and food for each meal.

### BUDGET/SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Annual budget is \$200 per meal. The rest of the needed funding/food is donated.

### BIGGEST CHALLENGE:

Meal planning: We don't ask people who eat a holiday meal at the church to pre-register. (We do ask that requests for meal deliveries be called in before the holiday.)

### ADVICE TO OTHERS:

Be sure to have enough volunteers.

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

Susan Jeannette  
Director of Outreach Ministries  
608-256-4646 Ext. 16  
sjeannette@fumc.org



# SHAAREI SHAMAYIM

---

*Initiative/Project Name:*

## Intergenerational Tu B'shevat Seder



### **BRIEF DESCRIPTION:**

“Let us bless the Source of Life that creates the fruit of the tree. Let us pull strength and wisdom from our traditions.”

In the Jewish tradition, Tu B'shevat is a holiday that falls in January or February and celebrates the birthday of the trees. In the 17th century, Jewish mystics developed a Tu B'shevat seder that communally marks the importance of trees and our connection to nature. This tradition has become popular in Jewish communities. Every year children and adults of all ages gather to celebrate nature through eating particular fruits and nuts, singing songs and reading poetry/stories about trees. The seder revolves around “four worlds” — the world of action, the world of formation, the world of creation and the world of spirit. There are four sections of our seder to correspond to these worlds. We drink four glasses of wine or juice to symbolize these different worlds.

### **YEAR STARTED:**

We have always celebrated Tu B'shevat, as the holiday happens every year.

### **MOTIVATION:**

This is part of the Jewish year cycle.

### **FREQUENCY:**

Annual.

### **BENEFITS:**

Our members benefit by connecting the importance of trees to their everyday lives through food, song and blessing.

### **MEASURE OF SUCCESS:**

Every year we celebrate the seder slightly differently, attracting different people who benefit from both innovative and traditional ideas about Jewish environmentalism.

### **VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED:**

We need a minimal number, just people to set up and clean up.

### **BUDGET/SOURCE OF FUNDING:**

The cost is minimal; we have a potluck dinner and spend \$50 on fruits, nuts and juice. It comes out of our operating budget.

### **BIGGEST CHALLENGE:**

Our biggest challenge is how to continually introduce this holiday to new people in our community and connect it to their everyday lives in a way that is compelling and enriching.

### **ADVICE TO OTHERS:**

There are plenty of opportunities in religious communities to find communal traditions that speak to contemporary issues. The challenge is to figure out how best to utilize ritual in a way that speaks to people's spiritual needs and also calls upon them to act differently and to do our part to make this fragile world a better place.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Rabbi Laurie Zimmerman  
608-257-2944  
rabbi@shamayim.org



# FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

---

Initiative/Project Name:

## Men's Homeless Shelter Monthly Meals

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

Each month, First United Methodist Church provides volunteers to purchase, prepare and serve breakfast and dinner at the Porchlight Men's Drop-in Shelter at Grace Episcopal. We also prepare 150 sack lunches that are distributed the next day to each shelter guest.

### YEAR STARTED:

1984.

### MOTIVATION:

Church members wished to provide meals to homeless individuals in our community.

### FREQUENCY:

Monthly.

### BENEFITS:

Homeless men in the downtown area benefit. So does Porchlight Inc., which relies on churches and community members to help with these meals.

### MEASURE OF SUCCESS:

The men enjoy the meal and fellowship. Volunteers feel that they have gained more than they have given.

### VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED:

Seven volunteers heat and serve food; 20-plus volunteers purchase/provide food for the meals.

### BUDGET/SOURCE OF FUNDING:

There is no budget. Everything is donated.

### BIGGEST CHALLENGE:

Coordinating food donations and assembling at the church, to take to the shelter.

### ADVICE TO OTHERS:

Provide volunteers education and training with regard to homelessness.

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

Susan Jeannette  
Director of Outreach Ministries  
608-256-4646 Ext. 16  
sjeannette@fumc.org

### OTHER RELEVANT FUMC ACTIVITIES:



- **Alternative Gift Market**  
*Gifts that make a difference in this world are available from a market set up in the church's fellowship hall each Sunday during Advent. The market offers Christmas gift selections in one place, saving time and energy while supporting ministries that bring glimpses of peace and justice in the world. Gifts that make a difference have included food products from local farmers, Equal Exchange, Heifer International, Plant-A-Tree in Palestine and food gift jars put together by church youth as a fundraiser for service trips.*
- **God's Good Green Forum**  
*Held Sunday mornings. Topics have included:*
  - *The spiritual dimension of the environmental crisis.*
  - *Demos about ways to conserve energy and use renewable energy sources at home and work.*
  - *Health inequities of global warming.*
  - *A local farmer's perspective about Community Supported Agriculture subscriptions.*
  - *Solving environmental and energy problems with a federal tax shift.*

# FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY

---

Initiative/Project Name:

## Ethical Eats Task Force

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

We aim to be more aware of what we eat, and why and how our food choices affect the planet and its inhabitants. We celebrate the joyful aspects of eating, and eating in community. We are catalysts for awareness and change in helping people make daily food choices that are ethical, healthy and a basis for spiritual practice. We also collaborate with other community groups that explore, educate and act around issues of ethical eating.

### YEAR STARTED:

2008.

### MOTIVATION:

The Unitarian Universalist Association has made it a denominational priority to explore the ways our food choices impact our communities and our world.

### FREQUENCY:

The nine-member task force meets every other week to brainstorm how the congregation and its subsets can get involved in the Ethical Eats mission. Congregational involvement depends upon the event: We plan a lecture series that is open to the public and encourage small-group opportunities to plan gardens, teach children to cook, take field trips to learn how/where food is grown, discuss books with food themes, engage in food-issue activism and pursue other food-related projects/initiatives.

### BENEFITS:

The potential exists for all ages and interests to learn and grow.

### MEASURE OF SUCCESS:

We are encouraged by the congregation's level of interest but also consider this as ongoing effort that has no singular way to measure success.

### VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED:

The number of volunteers needed depends upon the project. A half-dozen of us provide all that we need to present the public lectures. This includes the setup, plus core menu and cleanup for a potluck that precedes the public lectures.

### BUDGET/SOURCE OF FUNDING:

The church has provided a \$200 honorarium per lecturer, but donations of \$5 per lecture attendee lessen this cost. Participants absorb the costs for most other activities.

### BIGGEST CHALLENGE:

We need to help subsets of the congregation feel more empowered to pursue food projects/initiatives on their own. The task force tends to be seen as the entity that will execute whatever ideas sprout, and this is not a realistic presumption. Food also can be an emotionally charged topic, so we try to bring in lecturers who represent many aspects of thought/opinion. Last, we have the challenge to maintain enthusiasm and make this work ongoing. It is not something that has an end point.

### ADVICE FOR OTHERS:

Work to help all members of the congregation feel empowered, enthused and invested in the core of what you do.

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

Rev. Kelly Crocker  
608-233-9774 Ext. 112  
kellyc@fusmadison.org

### OTHER RELEVANT FUS ACTIVITIES:

- **Porchlight Men's Shelter**  
*Dinner and breakfast provided monthly.*
- **Interfaith Hospitality Network**  
*"Buddy congregation" with Christ Presbyterian since 2004.*
- **Solar Oven Project**  
*Funds raised to purchase, ship solar ovens to locations where cooking fuel is scarce.*
- **Annual Water Service**  
*Raises awareness of global water issues, ways to conserve at home.*
- **"Eating in Place"**  
*Potluck, program development.*
- **Adult Education**  
*Course titles include "Menu for the Future," "Joyous & Thoughtful Family Dining," "Ethical Eating in 30 Minutes."*
- **Film Showings/Discussions**  
*Including "Asparagus: Stalking the American Life."*
- **Shared Meals**  
*Annual Thanksgiving potluck, Seder meal and Hungarian Feast (fundraiser for partner church in Transylvania).*
- **Outreach Offerings**  
*A nonprofit or community program receives one-half of cash offerings at worship services.*

# GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH



*Initiative/Project Name:*

## Feeding Faithfully Series: Holiness, Hospitality, Hunger and Health

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

This eight-week series involved a brief worship period, table fellowship (lunch) and an examination of a food-related theme in a 50-minute session each week. Our themes were:

**Holiness** – The first session challenged us to “pay attention” to food and to think about the sacred and profane in our culture’s eating habits. The second introduced resources from the Christian tradition for “feeding faithfully” and connecting our Eucharistic spirituality to everyday eating and feeding.

**Hospitality** – This theme was a part of each session. We discussed our food ministries (including our food pantry, shelter meals) and the significance of fellowship over food. We shared meals made by volunteers. The program culminated in a coffee hour celebration of the Capital City Cookbook (Madison’s first cookbook that was produced by Grace’s women 125 years ago) and our three subsequent cookbooks that reflect our tradition of hospitality.

**Hunger** – Speakers from the Wisconsin Council of Churches and the Dane County Food Council helped us explore hunger here/abroad and think about our feeding ministries. Church members participated in or supported the Hunger Walk.

**Health** – We examined sustainability, food systems and human health with a representative from REAP. We enjoyed a meal made entirely from foods purchased at the Dane County Farmers’ Market (costing less than \$3.50 a person). We encouraged “field trips” to relevant local events (Wendell Berry reading, Will Allen talk, Food for Thought Festival).

### YEAR STARTED:

2009.

### MOTIVATION:

The catalyst was our education director, Darby Puglielli, who used her own GIFT ([www.growinginfaithtogether.org](http://www.growinginfaithtogether.org)) format to introduce food, health and sustainability into adult education. A new member who is a scholar of food/religion and has worked with faith communities on these issues helped her develop the series.

We have a long history of eating and feeding at Grace and an even longer tradition in

Anglicanism of food being the center of our worship in the Eucharist. We wanted to reflect on the connection between that sacred eating ritual and eating everyday, especially in light of the recent interest in/concern over food in our culture and as we envision our food ministries for the future.

### FREQUENCY:

This was a one-time series, but it’s an ongoing conversation!

### BENEFITS:

We hope the entire congregation and those to whom we minister benefit as we become even more intentional about our food ministries and how they relate to larger concerns about food.

### MEASURE OF SUCCESS:

The program was a success because it’s spawned continued reflection and action on several levels. For example, some participants purchased Community Supported Agriculture shares after the series. We rejuvenated our Coffee Hour and introduced sustainable practices (such as using Fair Trade coffee that supports our diocese’s mission in Haiti). We are using more locally sourced foods. We’ve seen an increase in members who help with shelter meals.

### VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED:

The weekly meals required volunteers for cooking, serving and cleanup. Otherwise, thanks to our speakers and organizers, the preparation required few. But the conversation required all!

### BUDGET/SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Funding came from our education/hospitality budgets and contributions from participants (for the meals). We provided modest honoraria for guest speakers (contributed to their organizations).

### BIGGEST CHALLENGE:

People are at different places in the conversation on food, even in Madison. Providing content for those already deeply involved in the food movement and those just learning about it can be challenging in 50-minute sessions. Overcoming language barriers was also a

challenge. Having the common meal and encouraging many voices (through conversation and small-group projects, reading quotations aloud in Spanish and English, question periods, sharing food memories) helped to bring people together.

### ADVICE FOR OTHERS:

Know where your congregation is on food matters: Don’t assume everyone has read Michael Pollan or shops at the farmers’ markets! Figure out how to encourage and empower on many levels. Don’t forget about joy and celebration: If you just focus on the “thou shalt nots,” you’ll lose people and send a skewed message. Draw on the wealth of resources available: We can provide a resource list and suggest local speakers. It makes an impact to link theological/ethical teachings and worship to eating (which seems so “profane” to most of our culture).

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

Darby Puglielli  
[togracechurchformation@gmail.com](mailto:togracechurchformation@gmail.com)

Dr. Corrie Norman  
[corrienorman1959@yahoo.com](mailto:corrienorman1959@yahoo.com)

### OTHER RELEVANT GRACE ACTIVITIES:

- 2009 marked the 30th year of our Food Pantry.
- We regularly feed some 150 homeless guests at our shelter.
- Our Hispanic congregation eats together each Sunday.
- We eat in small groups in homes monthly and all together each week during Coffee Hour.

# ISLAMIC ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP OF WISCONSIN

---



*Initiative/Project Name:*

**Islamic Environmental Group of Wisconsin**

## **BRIEF DESCRIPTION:**

We intend to educate our members, the Muslim community and the public about the Islamic environmental teachings, to apply the Islamic environmental teachings in daily life and to form coalitions with interfaith environmental organizations in Wisconsin — working toward a just and sustainable future.

## **YEAR STARTED:**

2004.

## **MOTIVATION:**

There is a critical need to educate the Muslim community about the Islamic environmental teachings in the Qur'an (the holy book for Muslims) and the Hadith (reports on the sayings and traditions of Prophet Muhammed) in all aspects of daily life.

## **FREQUENCY:**

Ongoing.

## **BENEFITS:**

Muslim families, households and individuals benefit from this initiative. We organize several free environmental workshops for Muslim families/households/individuals. Participants learn and explore ways to apply the Islamic environmental and stewardship teachings in their daily lives, reduce waste, conserve energy and water, eat healthier foods and together build a stronger sense of community.

We organized and sponsored several Interfaith Earth Month events in April 2009. One of the main activities was a poster contest for K-12 students in Wisconsin. More than 150 students participated, and poster exhibits were a part of several Interfaith Earth Month events that focused on food and faith.

Also in 2009, we participated in a community garden for the first time! It was a successful and enjoyable experience. Lots of vegetables were donated to the local food pantry.

## **MEASURE OF SUCCESS:**

One of our most successful programs occurs during Wisconsin Interfaith Energy Awareness Month in October, in collaboration with the Wisconsin Interfaith Climate and Energy Campaign. We sponsored the distribution of energy-efficient compact fluorescent lights to the poor. As a 2008/2009 Energy Star "Change the World" pledge leader, we successfully prevented 539,170 pounds of greenhouse gas emissions and saved 286,040 kWh of energy in October 2008.

In 2007, we met our goal of obtaining 100 household pledges, helped to empower a saving of 84,600 kWh of energy and prevented 122,700 pounds of greenhouse gas emissions. Our efforts have earned recognition from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy.

## **VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED:**

Five to ten, or more.

## **BUDGET/SOURCE OF FUNDING:**

This is a volunteer group that relies mostly on in-kind donations from our members and their supporters.

## **BIGGEST CHALLENGE:**

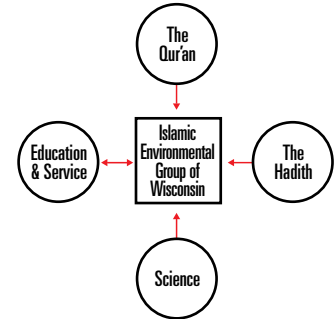
Funding.

## **ADVICE FOR OTHERS:**

Collaborate with others who have similar interests.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Huda Alkaff  
interfaith.earth@yahoo.com



# MADISON FRIENDS MEETING

---

*Initiative/Project Name:*

**Peace, Social and Earth Concerns Committee**

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION:**

The committee addresses a broad range of social justice issues in many ways. We bring speakers and presentations to educate around global warming. We discuss what we can do personally and as a Meeting to support initiatives to improve the physical, emotional and spiritual health and sustainability of our world. We hope to develop a Meeting-wide initiative but are not sure how that will take shape.

**YEAR STARTED:**

This emphasis has evolved over many years. Friends in Unity with Nature had been a longstanding committee of the Madison Friends Meeting. A few years ago, this committee was absorbed into the Peace and Social Concerns Committee.

**MOTIVATION:**

We have become aware that issues of peace and justice are inextricably linked with the future of our natural world, and so we hope to look at our programs and efforts in a holistic way rather than separating concerns such as agriculture, war, racism, global warming, poverty and the oil crisis.

**FREQUENCY:**

Ongoing.

**BENEFITS:**

Our faith community benefits by learning more about the issues, what we can do and how we can integrate our actions into our spiritual lives. The outside community benefits from whatever social change may ensue from our efforts and donations to people and projects that are in need. These include food and financial support to a local food pantry, a free meal site and a neighborhood center.

**MEASURE OF SUCCESS:**

The committee is a success in that people are engaged and want to learn/do more about making change that will sustain our planet and engender more justice.

**VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED:**

Everyone who is able to do anything!

**BUDGET/SOURCE OF FUNDING:**

Friends Meeting has budgeted some financial support for more than 12 international, national and local humanitarian and environmental organizations.

**BIGGEST CHALLENGE:**

We wish everyone were as concerned as we are!

**ADVICE FOR OTHERS:**

We would all benefit from working together and co-sponsoring programs on these issues.

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Vicki Berenson  
Current Convener, Peace,  
Social and Earth Concerns  
608-249-5553  
vicb@tds.net

# FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Initiative/Project Name:

## Tales from Planet Earth — The Hunger Season

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

This is a film festival sponsored by the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies at UW-Madison. In 2009 we screened “The Hunger Season,” a film that traces the journey of food aid from the fields of Wisconsin farmers to USAID and finally to Swaziland, where Justice, a village leader, struggles to feed his neighbors. The evening event also included a community “dinner” of the Wisconsin-grown cornmeal that is eaten in Swaziland and a panel discussion about the interconnectedness of global economics, climate change, biofuels and local/global hunger issues. Donations, accepted at the door, were divided equally among a hunger relief organization in Swaziland and the food pantry at First United Methodist Church.

### YEAR STARTED:

2008.

### MOTIVATION:

After interacting with several staff and our congregation members, Tales from Planet Earth was keenly interested in working with a faith community around the film “The Hunger Season.” Our church’s food pantry and commitment to international justice issues made us a perfect fit.

### FREQUENCY:

Although the event is over, an organization called Working Films has taken the pilot project at our church and developed a “Dinner and a Movie” kit that is available to any school, community center, faith-based organization or other interested group. The kit includes a copy of the film, a sack of the Wisconsin-grown cornmeal and guidance on how to have a meaningful discussion that includes local hunger issues.

### BENEFITS:

Tales from Planet Earth benefited greatly from this new partnership, and our church will continue to use this event and its results to further its humanitarian efforts. Financial donations made at the film screening were donated to a hunger relief organization in Swaziland and our church’s food pantry.

### MEASURE OF SUCCESS:

We feel the initiative was a tremendous success and look forward to this pilot effort having a ripple effect across the country as the kits and the film move into national distribution.

### VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED:

At least 10 volunteers are required to set up the film screening, prepare the food, organize the panel or group discussion.

### BUDGET/SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Funding primarily came from Working Films and the Tales from Planet Earth event budget. The “Dinner and a Movie” kits are available for any organization to purchase on the web. If a Madison-area organization is interested in “The Hunger Season,” supplemental local film footage is available. Please contact Molly Schwebach at The Nelson Institute.

### BIGGEST CHALLENGE:

Panel discussions or group discussions after the film need to be well-structured, to help the audience link images in the film to their own lives and actions.

### ADVICE FOR OTHERS:

Strong stories and powerful films can have a tremendous influence on people and prompt action. Consider using film as a way to discuss issues and motivate people.

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

Molly Schwebach  
Outreach Specialist  
Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies  
608-265-6712  
mayoung3@wisc.edu



# UNITY OF MADISON SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY

---

## Initiative/Project Name: Sharing the Harvest

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

A miniature outdoor Farmers' Market is held on our grounds from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on certain Sundays throughout the summer. Unity member "vendor volunteers" donate fresh, homegrown food that is kept under colored canopies, giving the event a festive feel while providing shade. Products for sale include produce, home-baked goods and jams.

Drummers, or other entertainers, perform outside during these Harvest Sundays. Signs of hospitality are obvious everywhere. People browse the produce tables, sit and enjoy the entertainment, converse while having a bite to eat and coffee/tea/juice. This is a wonderful way to build community. A table with information on the environment also is set up for the congregation to explore.

### YEAR STARTED:

2007.

### MOTIVATION:

A friend and I were talking about organic food and the importance of it. She mentioned that her husband liked having a garden and that he used to sell his produce at the Farmers' Market in Madison. I suggested that maybe he would like to sell some of his produce at Unity. I talked to our minister, Rev. Marshall Norman, and — presto! — Sharing the Harvest became a reality.

### FREQUENCY:

The Harvest starts the last Sunday in June and is held every second and fourth Sunday until the end of September.

### BENEFITS:

The entire community benefits by learning about organic food, talking with people who grow the produce, building community while browsing the tables and raising funds for other programs at Unity.

### MEASURE OF SUCCESS:

Sharing the Harvest builds community, increases awareness of healthy/local foods and supports our desire to better care for ourselves and the earth.

### VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED:

The environmental team sponsors and is in charge of the Harvest Sundays, but they count on teamwork. Three people do set-up, selling, tear-down and other tasks. Some of the vendors tend their own tables; entertainers and hospitality volunteers do their own set-up.

### BUDGET/SOURCE OF FUNDING:

There is no budget; the program is based on donations and volunteers. Proceeds from the sale of the donated produce support Unity's programs.

### BIGGEST CHALLENGE:

The weather, but so far we have had good weather on Harvest Sundays!

### ADVICE FOR OTHERS:

Plan far in advance! Have volunteer workers lined up. Advertise and announce the event in church a lot.

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

Diane Pauly  
608-231-6193  
dpauly@charter.net

### OTHER RELEVANT UNITY ACTIVITIES:

- **Porchlight Project**  
*Serving 15 meals a year at the Porchlight men's shelter.*
- **Porchlight Pantry**  
*Food, clothing, household furnishings donated.*
- **Fitchburg Fields**  
*Hoping to help employ Porchlight patrons to grow organic produce.*
- **Second Harvest/ Feed America**  
*Canned or other dry food donated.*
- **Helping Hands**  
*Assistance to Unity members in need of food, paying rent and other help.*
- **Thanksgiving Dinner**  
*Potluck meal, with Unity providing the turkey.*

# ST. THOMAS AQUINAS CATHOLIC PARISH

---

*Initiative/Project Name:*

## Winter Farmers' Market and Brunch

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

The Winter Farmers' Market and Brunch is a four-hour Saturday morning event that concludes our weeklong celebration of St. Thomas Aquinas week in January. Local farmers bring produce and products for sale to our urban parish, and a local chef directs parishioners in the preparation of a brunch made from locally produced food. The market provides our parishioners the opportunity to meet farmers in our diocese and gives farmers the opportunity to increase production, sales and marketing. The farmers also educate consumers about the importance of buying locally raised, sustainably produced food. Part of the proceeds from product sales is donated to the Harvest of Hope Fund, which helps farm families in financial distress. Proceeds from the meal go to the three local food pantries that our parish supports.

### YEAR STARTED:

2009.

### MOTIVATION:

The concept was introduced by the diocesan liaison with the Catholic Rural Life Conference and supported by the Justice and Peace Committee (some committee members had recently completed an eight-week session on climate change).

### FREQUENCY:

We hope to make this an annual event.

### BENEFITS:

Parishioners benefit from learning more about the neighboring rural communities in the diocese. They are exposed to the concept of Community Supported Agriculture, learn the value of eating locally raised and sustainably produced food, socialize with each other and neighbors of other faiths, share time together during preparation, serving and cleanup for the event. Farmers benefit from increased sales and marketing during the slow winter months.

### MEASURE OF SUCCESS:

We consider the initiative a great success. We had nearly 200 attend, many from our neighboring faith communities. Not only did we educate our parishioners on issues facing farmers, we began to develop relationships with farmers, other faith communities and within our own parish. Local food pantries received \$450 in proceeds.

### VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED:

A committee of four planned and set up for the event. On the day of the event, we had two shifts of three hours with six to nine cooks/servers, plus a three-hour shift of four to clean up. We also had three to four people selling tickets before and after Masses during the two weekends before the event.

### BUDGET/SOURCE OF FUNDING:

The event pays for itself.

### BIGGEST CHALLENGE:

The biggest challenge is educating the parish on the connections between their faith and locally produced food.

### ADVICE FOR OTHERS:

The best thing to do is to participate in one of the events before offering one. So much can be gained from working with someone who has done this before.

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

Jennifer Ludtke  
608-833-2606  
Jennifer@stamadison.org



# FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

---

*Initiative/Project Name:*

## Food Pantry: Food for Health, Sacks of Snacks, Showers for Homeless Guests

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

Our food pantry operates five days a week: 2.5 hours on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings; one hour on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Our pantry is a “choice” pantry: Volunteers escort guests through the various sections, and they choose the foods they like/want. The amount of food given out is based on the size of the household. We are an “as needed” pantry, meaning guests can utilize the pantry as often as they need.

Food for Health provides specialized food for seniors and the disabled with medical needs (such as diabetes or hypertension). These foods are purchased retail and usually delivered to the recipient.

Sacks of Snacks helps homeless adults and teenagers who come in and say they are hungry. We have sandwiches, bottled water and lunch bags of snack food available for distribution upon request. During our morning pantry sessions, a “shower volunteer” coordinates and supervises showers for homeless guests upon request.

### YEAR STARTED:

Our food pantry began in 1984, the same year our church members began serving meals at the drop-in shelter for men. The three projects within the pantry began in 2009.

### MOTIVATION:

We recognized the need in our community and created a program to respond to it. The program has been modified as needed to respond to our guests, our volunteers and the local economy.

### FREQUENCY:

Ongoing.

### BENEFITS:

Our patrons (low-income individuals and families) benefit by having a food resource they can use every or any weekday. They can also get as much bread and produce as is available, as well as other non-food items like books and new/used clothing. One-third of our pantry recipients are children.

Food for Health benefits seniors and the disabled, who often cannot afford the specialized food they need. Sacks of Snacks and Shower projects benefit the homeless men and women we see daily: They can take a shower, put on clean clothing and get something to eat.

### MEASURE OF SUCCESS:

We served over 15,000 individuals in our food pantry in 2009. Currently we provide 15-20 showers and more than 50 Sacks of Snacks per week, as well as serving about 40 families in our pantry per day.

### VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED:

We have about 65 volunteers and regular donors working in the pantry. This includes a volunteer who gleans bread every week, another who donates 50 pounds of rice each month, our shower supervisor, two high school groups of special-needs students who repackage food, diapers and dry goods — and a dedicated group who unloads the 2-3 TONS of food delivered each week by the Food Bank.

### BUDGET/SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Our 2009 pantry budget was \$66,700. Our 2010 budget will reflect the increases in usage and need experienced this past year. Funding sources are grants from trusts and foundations, plus donations from non-members and other churches. However, our primary source of funding is the generosity of our congregation, through special offerings and individual giving.

### BIGGEST CHALLENGE:

Our biggest challenge is providing fresh, healthy food rather than the canned and packaged foods more readily available through the Food Bank. We also receive government commodities and have access to items from the Community Action Coalition's gleanings and garden programs. Ninety percent of the food from these sources is processed and pre-packaged instead of fresh and wholesome. We are currently partnered with the Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition, which has raised money to provide us with CSA shares of fresh produce. We want to form more of these types of collaborations, to offer more organic food and give pantry guests more healthy options.



### ADVICE TO OTHERS:

Ask a lot of questions. The primary question is “Will you help?” Utilize the wisdom of those who have done it already. Be prepared for a lot of hard work to get started and keep it going – but know that it will all be worth it when you see the first person cry while thanking you.

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

Susan Jeannette  
Director of Outreach Ministries  
608-256-4646 Ext. 16  
sjeannette@fumc.org

# MADISON-AREA URBAN MINISTRY

---

*Initiative/Project Name:*

## Restorative Justice Program Food Pantry

### **BRIEF DESCRIPTION:**

We sponsor re-entry programs for people returning to the community from prison and jail. These include a small, non-perishable emergency food pantry. We provide two days of food, just enough to allow us to connect our clients to the larger food pantry system.

### **YEAR STARTED:**

2007.

### **MOTIVATION:**

We were seeing many men and women released from prison with no food and no money: They were being put up in a motel. Many of them would arrive in our offices the same day they were released — late afternoon, hungry and too late to access other pantry options. We wanted to make sure that no one left our offices hungry.

### **FREQUENCY:**

It is ongoing. Staff determines whether someone is in need and eligible.

### **BENEFITS:**

People newly released from jail or prison benefit from having a source of food in their first days back in the community.

### **MEASURE OF SUCCESS:**

We consider the program a success. No one leaves without some food in their stomach and without enough to carry them through a couple of days.

### **VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED:**

Operated by staff.

### **BUDGET/SOURCE OF FUNDING:**

We run the program with about \$500 per year. Funding comes from First Business Bank, individual and congregation donations, plus an annual food drive by the state Department of Corrections.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Linda Ketcham  
608-256-0906  
linda@emum.org

# UNITY OF MADISON SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY

---

## Initiative/Project Name: Environmental Teams

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

Environmental teams inspire community members to care for God's creation. Our activities include:

- Creating and selling Unity of Madison reusable cloth/canvas shopping bags.
- Leading discussions on the book "Voluntary Simplicity."
- Collecting used cell phones, which were reconditioned for victims of domestic violence.
- Making church facilities more energy efficient by sealing windows; wrapping/insulating the furnace ducts; installing a new energy-efficient dishwasher and hot water heater; and replacing old incandescent light bulbs.
- Replacing disposable plates and cups with permanent ware and converting to non-toxic cleaning products.
- Purchasing a rain barrel to help control storm water runoff.
- Collecting and donating 50 bikes to the "Working Bikes Cooperative," which sends them to developing countries.
- Encouraging participation in the Adopt a Highway program.
- Creating a "Clue" game to educate the congregation on the impact of climate change.
- Adding articles about environment in Unity's newsletter.

### YEAR STARTED:

2007.

### MOTIVATION:

We have a strong interest in the environment and what we are doing to it as humans, realizing that what we do to the earth we do to ourselves. We realize that people need to be educated to the fact that EVERYTHING we look at, touch or see was taken from the earth! We wonder how long can we do this without hurting/destroying our source of life, and ourselves in the process.

### FREQUENCY:

We have monthly meetings, with lots of action between meetings.

### BENEFITS:

Working together to achieve what we can for Mother Earth creates health, friendships, bonding, community and a way for us to show the true meaning of love.

### MEASURE OF SUCCESS:

Our programs encourage us to reduce, reuse and recycle as a result of learning more about the impact of our actions on the environment. The positive response and involvement from the Unity congregation has grown since the Green Team's formation.

### VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED:

The Green Team has 14 active members. Other participation varies, depending on the event.

### BUDGET/SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Funding primarily comes from events.

### BIGGEST CHALLENGE:

The planning, work and preparation are always the biggest challenge. But somehow it comes together in time, and fun is had by all.

### ADVICE FOR OTHERS:

Love what you do. Feel it in your heart — then express what you feel. Don't be afraid to educate: People don't always know as much as you might think they do. But don't ever think that you know all there is to know. The world is full of wonder: It's just waiting for us to discover its secrets!

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

Diane Pauly  
608-231-6193  
dpaul@charter.net



# ORCHARD RIDGE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

---

Initiative/Project Name:

## Green Team



### BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

Our mission is to work closely with the Leadership Team and other ministries of the church to further the goals of the Next Generation Initiative, which includes our commitment to be a green church and reduce our carbon footprint.

We support the work of individuals to assess and make changes in their own lifestyles to be more environmentally responsible and sustainable. We have expanded community gardens on church land and related programming, inviting participation from our congregation and economically challenged neighborhoods. We continue to develop opportunities for our congregation, individually and collectively, to make changes in our own lives, our communities and the wider world that honor creation and Creator.

#### Green Team actions include:

- Sponsoring Heart and Soul educational sessions on climate change, vegetarian eating, greening our own building, composting and having a green Christmas.
- Selling the book "How Many Light Bulbs Does it Take to Change a Christian" as a fundraiser.
- Arranging visits by Dr. Cal DeWitt (to preach a sermon) and Ryan Schryver of Clean Wisconsin (to talk about climate change).
- Planning a worship service about care of creation, a "green retreat" at Pilgrim Center in Green Lake, a letter-writing campaign to support clean-energy legislation, plus participation in relevant local events (such as Take a Stake in the Lake).
- Establishing a "Green Corner" in the church newsletter, "E Posts" and a bulletin board with suggestions for greener living.
- Establishing a 15-person EnAct team.
- Composting Sunday morning coffee grounds.
- Finding ways to help members spend time with nature.

### YEAR STARTED:

September 2009.

### MOTIVATION:

The Next Generation Initiative included a workgroup entitled Faith In Action, a group that identified "care of creation" as an area of emphasis for our next generation. A group of interested members agreed to work together as the Green Team to promote care of creation.

### FREQUENCY:

The Green Team meets monthly.

### BENEFITS:

Our congregation benefits from the educational activities provided. Hopefully, the environment will benefit by changes we make in our own lives and our advocacy on green issues.

### MEASURE OF SUCCESS:

The Green Team is very energized and enthusiastic about what they are doing. We also have received positive feedback from the congregation.

### VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED:

There are eight members of the Green Team, and our pastors are very supportive. Other members of the congregation with specific expertise also contribute.

### BUDGET/SOURCE OF FUNDING:

We have no budget. We raised \$200 through book sales, but the money will be used as scholarships for the spring retreat.

### BIGGEST CHALLENGE:

Helping people understand that even small changes in their lives will help, although we know much bigger changes also need to occur.

### ADVICE FOR OTHERS:

Go for it! It's exciting to learn about the issues, help educate others and create opportunities for others to experience joy in creation.

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

Sara Roberts  
608-273-1114  
sarie914@sbcglobal.net  
  
Helene Nelson  
608-258-2546  
helenenel@aol.com



### OTHER RELEVANT ORCHARD RIDGE ACTIVITIES

- **Food for the Homeless**  
*Breakfast provided six times per year at Grace Episcopal's homeless shelter.*
- **Fall Harvest Brunch**  
*Locally grown food served to at least 100; local farmers attend and educate.*
- **Vegetarian Program**  
*Vegetarian eating group meets to share recipes, cook for each other.*

# COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

---



*Initiative/Project Name:*

## Rain Garden

### **BRIEF DESCRIPTION:**

This garden of native plantings and rock captures rainwater off the church roofs and allows much of it to be infiltrated into the soil, rather than running into the storm sewer and directly into the Dane County lakes.

### **YEAR STARTED:**

About 2006.

### **MOTIVATION:**

Covenant has very large roofs. Members of the church discussed ways to minimize the large amount of rainwater going into the lakes.

### **FREQUENCY:**

Ongoing.

### **BENEFITS:**

The lakes and surrounding residents benefit from the decrease in flooding, especially during times of large rainfall. The garden also decreases the amount of impurities and weed growth in the lakes during summer, when heat on the roofs warm the water, resulting in higher temperatures in the lakes.

### **MEASURE OF SUCCESS:**

It is largely a success, although not all the rainwater infiltrates into the soil during heavy rainstorms.

### **VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED:**

We have a four-person maintenance crew.

### **BUDGET/SOURCE OF FUNDING:**

There is no budget. The cost to install the garden was donated by a church member.

### **BIGGEST CHALLENGE:**

The original challenge was finding the funding and a good location. The current challenges are the volume of water experienced during heavy rains: Some of the excess ends up in the storm sewer. In winter, when ice and snow melt, they run off through the parking lot to the storm sewer.

### **ADVICE TO OTHERS:**

Think about how the rain garden will perform/function in the winter.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Joe Hanauer

Landscape Architect

608-798-1840

# COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

---

*Initiative/Project Name:*

## Alternative Transportation Sunday



### **BRIEF DESCRIPTION:**

On a Sunday near the end of May, all members and friends are encouraged to come to church by bus, walking, biking or carpooling — instead of each driving their own cars.

### **YEAR STARTED:**

About 2004.

### **MOTIVATION:**

Members of the church's Health Cabinet brainstormed ways to encourage the use of alternative transportation, to save on carbon dioxide emissions.

### **FREQUENCY:**

Once a year, every year.

### **BENEFITS:**

Participants benefit by using healthier modes of transportation, and the environment benefits by the reduction of carbon emissions.

### **MEASURE OF SUCCESS:**

This initiative has encouraged a number of people to ride their bikes as an alternative to using the car.

### **VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED:**

There are about seven people on the Health Cabinet.

### **BUDGET/SOURCE OF FUNDING:**

No budget or funding is required. We convey information in the church newsletter and Sunday bulletin and signs. Sunday School youth also advertise it and conduct a survey.

### **BIGGEST CHALLENGE:**

Our biggest challenge is trying to measure accurately how many people participate on that Sunday and on an ongoing basis.

### **ADVICE FOR OTHERS:**

Publicizing the event is crucial. We try to schedule it at the end of the Madison Bike to Work Week.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Randy Zirk  
608-238-2696  
zirkau@hotmail.com

# Food, Faith and Earth Day Resources

Compiled by Rev. Tina Lang,  
First United Methodist Church

**Renewal: Stories from America's Religious-Environmental Movement.** This documentary is inspired by the many Americans who are answering a spiritual call to confront the enormous challenges of environmental degradation. From within their Jewish, Christian, Muslim and Buddhist traditions, these men, women and children are finding ways to become caretakers of the earth. In addition to the 90-minute presentation titled "Renewal," there are shorter, but enhanced versions of each of the individual stories which include:

**A Crime Against Creation** – Evangelical Christians bear witness to mountaintop removal and the destruction of Appalachia. (11:30)

**Going Green** – GreenFaith, an interfaith partnership, helps congregations take first steps to environmental action. (14:30)

**Food for Faith** – Muslim tradition and charity forge bonds between urban communities and sustainable farms. (15:00)

**Ancient Roots** – The Teva Learning Center and Adamah bring environmental education together with Jewish tradition. (17:30)

**Compassion in Action** – A Buddhist community leads a campaign to save trees. (11:00)

**Eco-Justice** – The Holy Spirit inspires a battle against industrial contamination in small town Mississippi. (11:30)

**Sacred Celebration** – Native Americans and Catholics embrace religious ritual in their struggle to protect land and water. (9:30)

**Interfaith Power and Light** – Across America people of all faiths mount a religious response to global warming. (9:30)

**Nature Meditations** – Seven visual poems of the natural world. (6:00)  
Go to [www.renewalproject.net](http://www.renewalproject.net)

**Interfaith Resources on Earth Care.** The Forum on Ecology and Religion at Yale University has been gathering materials, publishing books and holding conferences on this subject for many years. They have a section for each world religion depicting their basic beliefs, practices and approaches to caring for the earth. Go to [www.religionandecology.org](http://www.religionandecology.org) and click on the Yale website and then World Religions.

**Earth Prayers from Around the World: 365 Prayers, Poems and Invocations for Honoring the Earth** brings together poems and prayers from various cultures including Navajo chant, Zuni chant, Hindu prayer, Inuit songs, Baha'i prayer, poetry and more. Four hundred pages of wonderful words for the earth. Chapters include: The Ecological Self, A Sacred Place, The Passion of the Earth, Healing the Whole, The Elements, Blessings & Invocations, Praise and Thanksgiving, Benediction for the Animals, Cycles of Life, The Daily Round, and Meditations. Edited by Elizabeth Roberts and Elias Amidon.

**EarthBound: Created and Called to Care for Creation** is a six-part series (20-minute segments on two DVDs with study guide) produced by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. It features Walter Brueggemann and many others, and helps participants discover the origins of misconceptions about scripture's portrayal of creation, recognize God's call to relate to the whole creation as Christian vocation, and experience how God's people throughout the Church are living out that call. [http://store.seracomm.com/index.php?main\\_page=product\\_info&products\\_id=156](http://store.seracomm.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&products_id=156)

**Earth Gospel** is a four-week guide to Christian prayer and meditation for God's creation, compiled and written by Sam Hamilton-Poore. Scripture readings, reflections and prayers for morning, midday and evening meditation times, all focusing on aspects of the environment, stewardship, praise and the connectivity between God, humanity and creation. Includes work of influential authors and theologians (contemporary and ancient), from Wendell Berry, John Calvin, Jurgen Moltmann and Julian of Norwich, to Annie Dillard, Emily Dickinson, Jane Austen and Henry David Thoreau.

**Just Eating? Practicing Our Faith at the Table.** A seven-week curriculum (middle school version and adult version available) for congregations exploring the relationship between the way we eat and the way we live. This curriculum and many other excellent resources produced by The Presbyterian Hunger Program and available at [www.pcusa.org](http://www.pcusa.org)



**Earth-Wise: A Biblical Response to Environmental Issues** by Calvin DeWitt is a six-chapter introduction to environmental concern from a Christian perspective. At the end of each chapter Dr. DeWitt includes discussion questions and activities. Available through CRC Publications at 1-800-333-8300.

**Simpler Living, Compassionate Life: A Christian Perspective.** This best-selling book provides an anthology and study guide for individuals or groups. Contributing authors include Richard Foster, Henri Nouwen, Calvin DeWitt, Wendell Berry and Cecile Andrews. Topics covered include time, money, global economics and justice, food choices, and theology. An adult study guide can be organized as a four-, six-, eight- or twelve-week group experience. Published by Living the Good News of The Morehouse Group.

**Northwest Earth Institute** Various four- to seven-session courses for congregational small group study at [www.nwei.org](http://www.nwei.org)

**Web Of Creation: Ecology Resources to Transform Faith Communities and Society** includes resources related to green congregations, education, worship, advocacy, personal lifestyles. [www.webofcreation.org](http://www.webofcreation.org)

**Eco-Justice Ministries** is an independent, ecumenical agency that helps churches answer the call to care for all of God's creation, and develop ministries working toward social justice and environmental sustainability. [www.eco-justice.org](http://www.eco-justice.org)

**Bread, Body, Spirit: Finding the Sacred in Food** by Alice Peck. From the book's introduction: "How can we find what is sublime in our everyday encounters with food? Where is God in the supermarket? Can we see the holy in a strawberry?"

**The Shaker Book of the Garden** by Lorraine Harrison features a facsimile of the original Shaker's publication, "Gardener's Manual," originally published in 1843. Harrison inspires gardeners to look beyond the obvious in everyday life as they go about their garden chores. She gives environmentally conscious advice on gardening, cooking and food preservation based on Shaker values and doctrine.

**If the Buddha Came To Dinner – How to Nourish Your Body to Awaken Your Spirit** by Hale Sofia Schatz. The author provides simple ideas that could radically change how and what one eats. She offers easy to follow guidelines for a healthy, satisfying diet that can provide energy and nourish the spirit. The book features sample menus and recipes for the inner spirit.

**Food, Farming, and Faith** by Gary W. Fick. This book looks at agricultural sustainability and Christianity. Using scripture and science, university agronomist Gary Fick demonstrates that faith can inform decisions about creating, managing, even consuming our food.

**Sustaining Heart in the Heartland** edited by Miriam Brown. The authors, representing the Rural Spirituality Team of the Churches' Center for Land and People, explore the richly varied forms of American rural spirituality and what it means to be a people of faith while facing the daunting challenges of today's increasingly hard-pressed rural way of life.

**Church on Earth** by Jeff Wild and Peter Bakken. The authors challenge congregations and people of faith to re-examine what it means to conduct church ministry in an ecological age.

**Faith and Healing: Eating as a Spiritual Act**, an April 2, 2009 article by Albert Scariato. "When we recall that God is the ultimate source of what we consume, eating can become an opportunity to give thanks to God for graciously supplying us with basic foodstuffs." <http://newsweek.washingtonpost.com/onfaith>

**Several articles about the sacred act of eating** at [www.theshalomcenter.org](http://www.theshalomcenter.org) The Shalom Center is dedicated to inspiring the Jewish community to greater attention and action on questions of peace and justice for the planet and all who dwell on it; and as part of this effort, to making common cause with peace and justice advocates of all faiths.

• • • • •

*Many excellent resources for worship, education, and action for Earth Week have been prepared by the National Council of Churches of Christ Eco-Justice Working Group. Several denominations have adapted the basic materials to address the distinctiveness of their own traditions. [www.ncccojustice.org](http://www.ncccojustice.org)*

# Sacred Acts of Eating and Caring for Creation

INTRODUCING

## THOUGHTFUL, INTENTIONAL ACTIONS

*Initiated by Madison Area Faith Communities*



*\* Unnamed stands for all those religious sensibilities and practices that go without a name. The symbol is an empty circle to which the practitioner adds the content.*



PRODUCED AS PART OF  
**FOOD, FAITH and EARTH DAY**

[www.foodfaithearthday.org](http://www.foodfaithearthday.org)

**PUBLICATION SPONSORS**

**Churches' Center for Land and People**, [www.cclpmidwest.org](http://www.cclpmidwest.org)

**First United Methodist Church**, [www.fumc.org](http://www.fumc.org)

**First Unitarian Society**, [www.fusmadison.org](http://www.fusmadison.org)

**PUBLICATION TEAM**

**Trudi Jenny**, *Publication Coordinator*, St. Thomas Aquinas Parish

**Brian Joiner**, Sustain Dane [www.sustaindane.org](http://www.sustaindane.org)

**Roger Williams**, Harvest of Hope [www.madisonchristiancommunity.org](http://www.madisonchristiancommunity.org)

*Editing services donated by:*

**Mary Bergin**, [www.midwestfeatures.com](http://www.midwestfeatures.com)

**Mary Hasheider**, [www.galenarocks.com](http://www.galenarocks.com)

*Layout and design services donated by:*

**Bob Marshall**, [bob@bobmarshalldesign.com](mailto:bob@bobmarshalldesign.com)

© 2010 FOOD, FAITH and EARTH DAY

— This booklet was printed by The Printing Place in Middleton on 100% Post Consumer Paper from Neenah Paper. —