

**Policy Proposals for Greening Sydenham St. United Church, Brantford, ON**  
**Prepared by Green Team members, February 11, 2009**

*(with thanks to United Church of Canada words of faith; words attributed to Chief Seattle; and policy statements of Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre in Birmingham, UK.)*

We feel inspired to live with respect in creation and to live by grace rather than entitlement, for we are called to be a blessing to the earth. We do not inherit the earth from our parents; we borrow it from our children. Biblical study reveals that we are members of a community of faith that God has called to care for one another and for all of creation, and that we cannot do one without the other. This requires continual learning, praying and acting according to our faith. As a congregation within The United Church of Canada we intend to do this in a variety of ways, to:

- **Care for one another and all of creation, in community**
- **Promote energy conservation**
- **Avoid harmful emissions to the atmosphere**
- **Reduce usage, minimize waste and recycle materials wherever possible**
- **Reduce our water consumption**
- **Manage land and gardens organically**

**Provide Community Support.** We will use and promote locally made products (such as those found at our Farmer's market) and offer and participate in others' environmental initiatives (such as *A Million Acts of Green* and Grand River Conservation Authority initiatives) *as a congregation* in recognizable ways. We will also promote green liturgies such as green funerals and weddings; updating our resources and our practices with new suggestions such as the use of beeswax candles.

**Conserve Energy.** For example, we will:

- Turn off appliances when not in use
- Regulate water temperature and insulate tanks
- Use low energy light bulbs and light sensors
- Thermostatically control the heating system to minimize energy consumption
- Replace old electrical equipment with energy saving equipment
- When sourcing an energy supplier, consider how they offset their carbon
- Consider options such as solar panels
- Measure our carbon footprint and set reasonable year on year reduction targets
- Monitor and manage energy consumed for effective reduction in cost and use

**Manage Water.** For example, we will:

- Record water consumption rates for review
- Collect rainwater as possible
- When installing new toilets, ensure that they are water efficient
- Discourage bottled water use and not provide bottled water at church
- Use phosphate-free and chlorine-free detergents and cleaners whenever possible
- Use chemical free cleaners such as microfiber cloths, vinegar, etc.

**Manage Waste.** For example, we will:

- Record the amount of food waste disposed of and recycled to enable review and reduction of consumption
- Limit packaging waste when purchasing by buying bulk and using returnable boxes/containers when possible
- Avoid buying non-recyclable materials, and phase out any disposable materials (e.g. cups) we may have
- Use soap dispensers in washrooms and kitchen
- Compost organic waste and invite talented members of our congregation to make compost bins and get vermicomposting underway if possible
- Advocate for a better household composting program in our city
- Reuse or recycle waste textiles
- Monitor annual paper use and set reasonable targets for reductions. Set printers and/or photocopiers to print double-sided, black and white by default when possible. Create scrap paper box
- Organize other recycling services such as for IT equipment, CDs, batteries, glass, plastic containers, aluminum cans
- Recycle unwanted furniture and other goods (e.g. with annual auction)

**Purchase in Sustainable Ways.** For example, we will

- Use post-consumer waste paper products for offices, kitchens and bathrooms and use low impact printing wherever possible
- Buy recycled and reusable/refillable printer cartridges
- Promote and use local and/or organic/free range food, drink and other products
- Promote and use Fairtrade food and drink and other products
- Assess suppliers on the basis of their sustainable credentials
- Consider providing facilities and lessons for cooking with leftovers, local organic and seasonal vegetables, etc.
- Ensure that new buildings, renovations, repairs, extensions, etc., are completed using sustainable principles. Natural paints and low impact carpet suppliers to be used.

**Promote Lower-impact Transportation.** For example, we will:

- Encourage congregational members to share journeys to church and work
- Promote the use of car clubs
- Record all church-sponsored journeys over 80 km and offset the carbon with a reputable organization and tree planting program
- Promote car-free excursions, e.g. to annual summer service at Five Oaks; walking and cycling and public transit travel

**Learn More and Help Others Learn More.** For example, we will:

- Support our Green Team who will keep in touch with developments concerning environmental issues and bring regular Green Moments to weekly worship
- Invite church members and staff into sharing/learning sessions so we can learn and take action together with everyone's creative ideas

- Become aware of the natural features within our particular biosphere and consider what we can do to, for example, support the return of eagles to the Grand River valley
- Actively support those who are caring for our grounds, gardens and buildings, in all of their efforts to care for creation and for one another.
- Invite church members and staff to help develop these policies further.