

Review – Year 2 as a Certified Green Sanctuary

Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton NY

July 2015 – June 2016

Following the official accreditation as a Green Sanctuary congregation in July 2014, the UU Canton NY congregation has maintained our commitment to continuing our initial Green Sanctuary projects and instituting additional efforts. This work was led by the Environmental Action Committee (EAC) in collaboration with many other leaders and church committees.

Worship

Several services this year focused on the environment and the 7th principle.

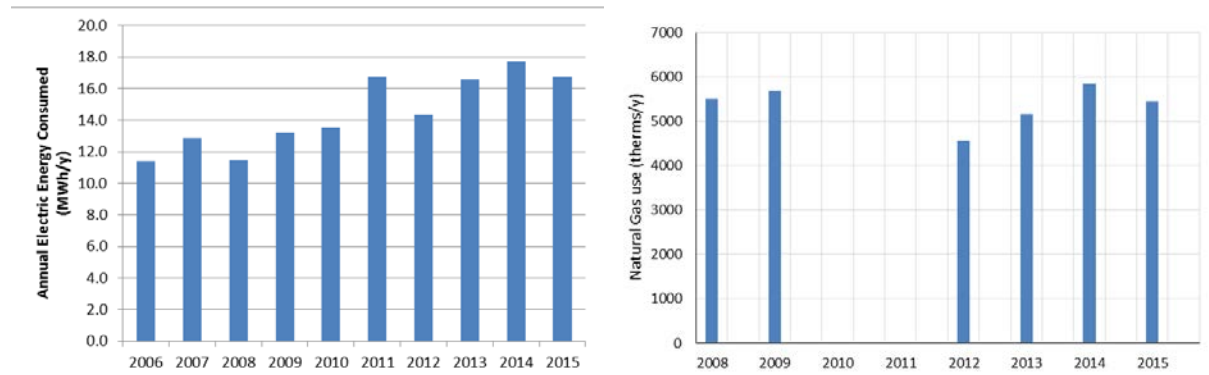
- July 5, 2015: A Return to the Garden – Charlie Bradt, Pulpit Guest
- September 27, 2015: Harvest Sunday – Rev. Joel Miller, Interim Minister
- January 3, 2016: Earth Stewardship - A Healthy Environment for a Healthy Community – Tom Langen, Pulpit Guest
- June 19, 2016: Flower Communion – Rev. Joel Miller, Interim Minister

Operations

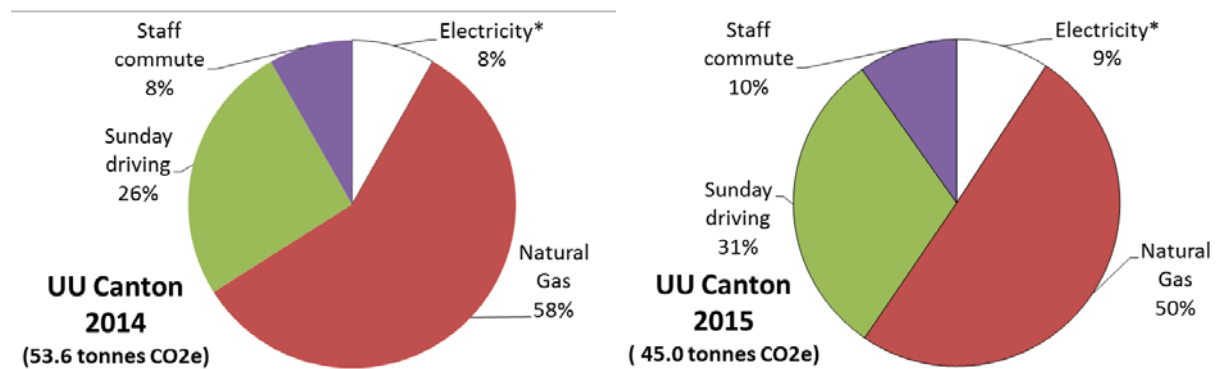
The Building & Grounds committee works consistently to make changes to reduce our energy demand.

- Six outside 100 W bulbs were replaced with 15W LEDs. The outside lights are on from dusk to 11 pm each day (~1500 kWh/y savings, 9% electricity).
- A new high-efficiency water heater was installed.

Analysis of the utility use shows that less energy was used in 2015 than the previous year, though the overall trend still shows an increase in electricity use over the last decade, likely due to increased use of the building. Increased weatherization, efficiency of the systems and programmable thermostats are all helping.



Greenhouse gas emissions were less in 2015 than in 2014, primarily due to reduced energy use. The values shown in the pie charts show emissions due to electricity use that would occur assuming average New York generation for electricity. With our purchase of 100% hydroelectricity, this slice of pie is removed from our emissions. GHG emissions for 2015 are really 40.8 metric tons CO₂(e)/y with our choice of green electricity.



Religious Education

- The continued use of Tapestry of Faith curricula for grades 2-7 provides units on the 7th principle in each classroom. The use of the Tool Box of Faith curriculum for the 4th - 6th grade class provided an opportunity to build bird houses and bee houses that were installed by the children at a local nature sanctuary and our own church garden.
- Three of the new adult education series – Coffee, Conversation & More were organized by the EAC. CC&M sessions are now held on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month to provide a venue for adult discussion of relevant topics. Sessions this year included:
 - December 5, 2015 – Paris Pledge – an update and what it means to us (Sue Powers)
 - February 14, 2016 - International Year of the Pulse – The what??? – ethical and sustainable eating. Sue Powers
 - April 10, 2016 - What does Community Net Metering mean to You and the Environment? Carol Gable

Environmental Justice / Community Outreach

The EAC has partnered with several local groups to promote our environmental ethic throughout the community.

- Several members of the UU Congregation including the co-chair of our Environmental Action Committee continue to serve on the Canton Sustainability committee and help lead the Solarize Canton campaign. The Solarize group worked hard last summer to educate the community on the financial and environmental benefits of solar and negotiate discounted pricing with two selected installers. Some of their activities included creating and showcasing a Solarize Float in

Canton's annual Dairy Princess Parade, staffing Solarize info tables at the parade and subsequent farmers markets, hosting information sessions at the UU church, participating in local news shows on the benefits of solar, and organizing a fall celebration for the Solarize volunteers and residents who contracted for a solar installation. These efforts resulted in 36 solar installations and NYSEERDA, the state agency providing grant funds and other assistance for these Solarize campaigns, describes the Canton campaign as one of the most successful in the state. Volunteers in nearby communities such as Ogdensburg and Plattsburgh are following Canton's example and running similar campaigns this summer.

The Canton Solarize team is now working with NYSEERDA and a selected installer to create a community net meter project which will allow residents and nonprofit organizations that are unable to install individual solar panels to participate in solar energy. Two solar gardens, approximately 300 kW in size, will be created. Participants may purchase "shares" to receive net credits on their electric bill for generated electricity or sign a power purchase agreement to contract for electricity discounted by 20%. Financial incentives are provided to allow four Low Income Families to participate in each project. It is our hope that the UU Church will be one of the nonprofit organizations participating in Canton's community net meter project.

- Sept 25, 2015 – The EAC and UU Canton church partnered with the Local Living Venture to support their annual Local Living Festival. The church space was used for several events and members of the congregation provided a few of the workshops.
- The Environmental Action Committee and Deep Root Center for Self-Directed Learning conducted a successful Toy Swap during the Local Living Fest in September. Families throughout the Canton/ Potsdam region were encouraged to donate items that were unloved or outgrown to the swap and then attend to find new items for their children. This initiative kept a large number of toys, games, and books out of the waste stream and put them in the hands of kids who will use them. Items that were leftover were donated to local libraries, and other charitable organizations.
- Oct 14, 2015 The North Country 350 Alliance (NC350) and the Social Action and Environmental Action Committees of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton will co-sponsor a presentation on personal divestment strategies and issues. "How to Invest With Your Values" will provide information on social and sustainable investing, impact investing, and fossil fuel-free investment options. The program was presented by Keoki Hansen, a specialist in sustainable, responsible, and impactful investing.
- Dec. 3, 2015 ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP & FAITH Rev. Joel Miller and Rajiv Narula joined spiritual leaders from across the North Country in a discussion about how our respective faiths value protecting the earth. This multi-cultural panel, sponsored by the Ministerial Association of Potsdam and Clarkson's Institute for a Sustainable Environment, included representatives from Mohawk, Christian, Islamic, Jewish, Hindu and UU faiths.