

Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ
214th Annual Meeting 2013
2013 GREEN CONGREGATION AWARDS

LEVEL ONE AWARDS

Wellesley Congregational Church

<http://wellesleyvillagechurch.org/>

Wellesley Congregational Church worked throughout the last year on many interesting projects. They hosted a “Climate Reality Workshop” with a speaker trained by Al Gore’s Climate Reality program. The workshop was co-sponsored with Sustainable Wellesley and Citizen’s Climate Lobby, held at the church and open to the public. Letter-writing events were held encouraging parishioners to review and sign letters in support of environmental matters including those forwarded by the UCC. An Earth Day event was centered on a display of 200 tree seedlings in the chancel for Sunday service – the seedlings were distributed to parishioners after the service. In coordination with the Mass Releaf Ministry, 11 new trees were planted and 35 existing tree beds were rehabilitated at the Wellesley Housing Authority. They participated in community (Sustainable Wellesley) and church events (Climate Revival). Environmental concerns and programs are highlighted weekly in the Sunday bulletin, on an environmental bulletin board, and in their weekly eNews. They made adjustments in their building like checking the hot water temperature level, cleaning radiators and cutting power to idle appliances. They continue to develop their “Environmental Ministry” Green Team.

South Acton Congregational Church

<http://southactoncc.org/>

South Acton Congregational Church started their green transformation in September of 2012. Building on what was learned at a bible study on caring for creation, they started with steps to make their building more efficient. NStar performed an energy audit, providing the church with more efficient light bulbs and pointing out where more insulation was needed throughout the building. NStar will help them convert from an old oil furnace to a cheaper more efficient gas furnace. The Green Team bought recycling bins for two locations in the building (paper, plastic, glass and metal). All appliances were put on power strips and unplugged when not in use. They have all but eliminated disposable cups and plates. Their large church dinners are served using real dishes and flatware rather than disposable. They are busy planning a dinner in October that will serve only locally grown food and will have information on CSAs and farmer’s markets in the area. To get the word out, the church started putting green tips in their Sunday bulletin insert and on their website, as well as having the minister preach environmentally themed sermons. Their Green Team is very excited to continue this work as there is still much to do.

South Church in Andover, UCC

<http://southchurch.com/>

Motivated by a love of God’s creation, South Church in Andover has engaged scripture, learned new ways of living, and taken actions that conserve and protect this unique and amazing planet that we all share. They engaged the congregation, including children and youth, in a continuing conversation about climate change, and introduced practices and technologies that reduce their carbon footprint. They had environmental speakers, offered a bible study featuring the “Green Bible,” formed a green team, watched environmental films, added recycling bins in the building, started a green column in their newsletter, and started the work of making their building more

efficient. They had an energy audit and have been implementing the recommendations. They have been participating in 350.org events for many years.

Church of the Covenant, Federated, Boston

<http://www.cotcbos.org/>

Church of the Covenant's Consumption and Justice Group (name of their Green Team) accomplished many things this past year. They were involved with Mission 4/1 Earth and Climate Revival. They planted trees and worked at a community farm with a community-supported agriculture program. At Climate Revival in Old South and Trinity Churches, they gathered with hundreds of Christians from all around New England and beyond to consider a faith response to the devastating reality of climate change. They hosted an informational table at Climate Revival. They had an all-church Earth Potluck – an entirely plant-based potluck, focused on the environmental benefits of eating less or no animal products as a good response to a food production system that causes environmental harm, not to mention pain to animals. Environmental sermons are preached often. They watched *Do The Math*, a video about the movement to divest from fossil fuels. They worked on many of the Action Steps to make their building more efficient (recycling paper/bottles/cans, putting office machines on power strips, etc.).

LEVEL TWO AWARDS

Grace Church UCC, Framingham

<http://www.gracechurchucc.org/>

Grace Church has made many changes to their building including installing programmable thermostats; replacing incandescent bulbs with CFL's; insulating and weather stripping the church pipes, walls, doors and water heaters. They installed low energy LED exit and emergency lighting and signs. They continue to install energy efficient fluorescent lights and ballasts. Grace Church has shifted communications from paper to electronic media. They are shifting to reusable dishes and utensils in church. Every Sunday, as part of their weekly Sunday environmental discussion, they ask who in the past week contacted Congress to demand effective climate legislation. They shifted to organic lawn/landscape care outside and environmental cleaning products inside. They developed a car pool system for activities and "walk/bike/carpool to church" days. They use their blinds to help regulate temperature. They became an institutional member of the Massachusetts Interfaith Power & Light. And they purchase "clean" electric energy.

South Church in Andover, UCC

<http://southchurch.com/>

South Church continued their work on their historic building by installing computer based programmable thermostats, replaced incandescent bulbs with CFL's and made efficient bulbs available for purchase for home use. Other improvements made were to install insulation and weather stripping. The church newsletter and weekly updates are now sent by email, eliminating most paper communications. A shift to using reusable dishes and utensils was made. "Walk/bike/carpool to church" days were instituted. South Church shifted to organic landscape and lawn care, composting leaves to augment soils where needed. They use shutters, curtains and blinds to regulate the temperature in their building. They became members of MIPL.

LEVEL THREE AWARDS

South Church in Andover, UCC

<http://southchurch.com/>

South Church replaced their 1940's era oil-fired burner with a modern, efficient natural gas-fired model. They replaced the appliances in the parsonage with Energy Star appliances, and they replaced toilets with low-flow units. They installed storm windows on all windows and installed insulated doors. They continue to participate in 350.org rallies and have encouraged the congregation to write to government officials and they provide information on various green issues. They put together a family retreat focused on global warming, with a speaker from the Union of Concerned Scientists who provided extensive information. They have held workshops on installing solar collectors at home. Their green Harvest Dinner focused on local food sources, including community supported agriculture. They participate in events with Mass. Interfaith Power and Light, and one of their Green Team Members is now on the MIPL Board. They worked with the Town of Andover Green Advisory Board to influence the design of a new school, the installation of solar panels at an existing middle school, and other Town projects. The church worked with the Environmental Club and Sustainable Andover internship program and Andover High School to set up and run the compost/recycling program in the school cafeteria and other environmental projects. Last fall they installed solar panels on the roof of the church. They expect it to generate about 92% of their annual electricity use, and reduce their CO2 output by 53 tons annually. They participated in Zero Waste Day, a town-wide event to recycle household goods. They participated in the Climate Revival in Boston on April 27, 2013.