

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

News from Unity's Sustainable Living Team

Anna Newton, Sustainable Living Team

How would you react if you suddenly discovered an endangered species in your front yard? When Unity Church member Kathy Sidle found rusty patched bumble bees on wildflowers in her yard, it launched this shy scientist on a campaign to teach others about the habits of these gentle and native bumble bees. She had already turned her East Side St. Paul yard into a native plant haven for birds and bees, now she teaches others to do the same. She speaks of the need for changing how we manage gardens, leaving leaf litter and small dead branches in place as nest sites. She has spent countless hours inventorying bumble bees across Ramsey County, including at Unity Church. Thanks to Kathy and church volunteers, the children's garden now hosts a **Pollinator Demonstration Garden** along its north and east sides. This is a lovely space in which to rest and recharge, and it has already attracted lots of bees, butterflies and goldfinches. A self-guided tour is available now!



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Your Sustainable Living Team has been busy since the Gather for the Earth (GFE) event in February.

- We have reviewed participant responses and organized them into the GFE Outcomes and Strategies document [available online at <https://bit.ly/gfteresults>]. Look for announcements in November to assemble in teams and make these dreams, of environment and climate justice and sustainability, real.
- The children's garden continues to supply healthy food to nearby food shelves.
- A pollinator garden now surrounds the children's garden. Many thanks to church families and individuals who help weekly!
- We have begun an audit of church building and maintenance practices, celebrating our substantial achievements while also identifying areas for improvement. Unity is applying for a BizRecycling grant to improve operations.
- Fall programming will be dedicated to environment and climate justice and sustainability, including getting out the vote.

Friday Film Series Discussion: *Divide in Concord*

Friday, September 4 • Discussion at 8:00 p.m.

Register: <https://bit.ly/divideinconcorddiscussion>

A grassroots revolution against bottled water begins with a conversation between Jean Hill and her grandson. Who has power in Concord, MA? How do they wield it? How would *you* respond?

Unfortunately, we are unable to stream this film. We encourage participants to view it ahead of the discussion (runtime 82 min.) It is available for \$3.99 from iTunes (<https://bit.ly/appliedivideinconcord>) and YouTube (<https://bit.ly/youtubedivideinconcord>). Watch the movie and then join the discussion (via Zoom) on September 4.

Wellspring Wednesday: Getting Out the Vote in a Time of Divisive Politics

September 9 • 7:00-8:30 p.m. • Register: <https://bit.ly/ucugotv>

Sustainable Living Team members and friends will speak to the importance of voting and present tools you need to get registered, and vote in person, by mail or absentee, and to help your friends and neighbors to do it, too.

Team Meetings

The SLT meets via Zoom every other week (September 6 and 20), at 11:30 a.m. Get involved! To join team meetings or help with gardens or projects, contact us at unitysustainabilityteam@gmail.com.

Obama School Outreach Team Update

Nancy Heege, Obama School Outreach Ministry Team

Have you been moved and touched by all you've learned about problems in our society since the death of George Floyd? Are you looking for ways to join other Unity Church members, led by Unity's Beloved Community Staff Team, in Committing to Our Next Right Action? Then we invite you to consider joining those who volunteer at Barack and Michelle Obama Elementary School. Our work with the school offers us the chance to live out our deepest values while making a real difference in the world. It provides us an opportunity to deepen our commitments to the future by serving the current needs of children in our neighborhood school. We are people who are finding ways to grow spiritually as we take effective action at the local level.

By the time you read this newsletter, our team will have met with the principal of Obama School, to hear how classes will be conducted this fall and what the anticipated needs of the scholars and teachers are. Last spring, the pandemic shut down our in-person efforts. Now we'll be looking for ways to continue the support for which the school has come to rely upon. Keep reading the church's newsletter and updates to see how you can join us in making a difference!

Donations Needed

Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf

Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf is currently in need of non-perishable food donations as well as shampoo, toilet paper, and small bottles of dish soap. Donations should be delivered to the front desk at the food shelf: 270 North Kent Street, St. Paul, 55102.