

# Greening up our Fellowship (A Deeper Shade of Green)

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Franklin, North Carolina (UUFF)

**Declaration of Intent 2022:** *Toward a more sustainable future*

**Our principles and purposes call us to take action to address the climate crisis and redress the social injustice that it causes. UUA has asked congregations to recommit to Green Sanctuary. This document supports and guides our efforts to meet our on-going commitment to the Green Sanctuary Program.**

## UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST PRINCIPLES

### **01. Whereas, we recognize that:**

Embedded in our Unitarian Universalist principles is **respect for the interdependent web of life.**

Our religious faith recognizes that we are part of the interdependent web of all life and that the *loss* of any part of the *diversity* of life will impact our own *well-being* and the *well-being* of the rest of the interdependent web. This is a recognition that all life on earth is part of our life support system and *changing* one thing *affects* everything.

#### **Therefore, we pledge to:**

**Connect** our religious beliefs with the actions needed to be *good stewards* of the earth and all its inhabitants. **Examine** how our Fellowship's *culture* and the individual *choices* we make either *support* or *diminish* our planet's ability to survive and consequently our own ability to survive. **Determine** what actions we can take in order to be better *stewards* of the planet.

## EDUCATION

### **02. Whereas, we recognize that:**

**Climate crisis and climate injustice** are happening now, and are not something that will happen in the distant future.

#### **Therefore, we pledge to:**

**Educate** ourselves and others about the relationship between a *changing climate* and *climate injustice*.  
**Take** immediate actions to *lessen* and *reverse* our impact on the climate and resultant climate injustice.

## ENERGY

### **03. Whereas, we recognize that:**

**Human behavior IS the main driving force** for the *unprecedented rate and severity* of climate change. That climate crisis and climate injustice are an *immediate* threat to life on our very small planet *and while one individual may not feel the situation is a crisis, more and more individuals are already impacted, some to a devastating level, and this is only 2022.*

#### **Therefore, we pledge to:**

**Reduce** our use of *non-renewable* fossil fuels and **limit** other activities that are contributing to a changing climate. **Invest** in *energy efficiency* and **utilize** *alternative energy sources* as a means of reducing *greenhouse gases* in our atmosphere. **Commit** to *reversing* our present energy use *choices* and other behaviors which negatively impact life on our planet. **Work** to make our Fellowship's energy use carbon neutral or negative.

## PEOPLE

### **04. Whereas, we recognize that:**

That **climate crisis** is *inextricably intertwined* with **climate justice** and the *welfare* of humans and our fellow passengers on this planet. Many millions of people are being displaced by the climate crisis and are being

designated as *climate refugees*. Furthermore, social injustice *conditions* bolster the actions *producing* climate crisis.

**Therefore, we pledge to:**

**Seek** ways to *redress* the damage that our way of life has caused to other people and nations. **Demand** that our government accepts climate *refugees* as both a *moral* and an International *legal right*. **Work** to *reduce* social injustice and promote social justice in its own right as well as for relationship to climate justice specifically.

**05. Whereas, we recognize that:**

Our **children** for many generations to come have the ***right to a stable and healthy planet***. (*We believe all life forms share this right.*)

**Therefore, we pledge to:**

**Support** all who are demanding climate justice for a *sustainable future* and **take** responsibility for our own contribution to the climate crisis through *appropriate* actions.

**06. Whereas, we recognize that:**

***Indigenous peoples*** have long *been protectors* of the land, water and other natural resources and are now under attack by *special interests*.

**Therefore, we pledge to:**

**Give** support and **act** in *solidarity* with the ***indigenous peoples*** of the earth to protect *all* land, water, and life. Do so at local, national, and global scales.

**07. Whereas, we recognize that:**

Our own *happiness and well-being* is tied inextricably to the *happiness* of ***everyone else on this planet*** and ***all life***, and that with our own *freedom*, ‘*pursuit of happiness*’, comes *responsibility* in our choices.

**Therefore, we pledge to:**

**Support** the *struggle for freedom and happiness* of ***all peoples*** across the world. This includes education, food security, housing, safety, and much more.

**08. Whereas, we recognize that:**

Our ***religious faith*** values ***the inherent worth and dignity of all individuals*** and that we have an *obligation* to support others in their quest for a *healthy* and *whole* life. Climate crisis is impacting ***peoples around the world*** due to *rising sea levels*, *an increase* in the number and severity of *unpredictable* weather events, and much more. ***Poverty*** is the main cause of suffering *in* much of the world and the ***climate crisis*** is contributing to this and *vice versa*.

**Therefore, we pledge to:**

**Educate** ourselves on how the *climate crisis* is impacting people around the world. **Promote** an *understanding* of how our actions affect others, *near and far*, and **examine** how we can better support *sustainable* and *dignified* livelihoods of people *everywhere* by choices that we make. **Support** actions to *reduce* poverty.

## CONNECTION WITH NATURE

**09. Whereas, we recognize that:**

An ***appreciation of nature*** in all its myriad forms and beauty is the *cornerstone* for preserving nature and this begins with ourselves and our children.

**Therefore, we pledge to:**

**Engage** ourselves and others in activities that *connect* us to nature and *help preserve* our natural resources. **Support** educational programs which help children *connect with, appreciate, and value* the natural world.

**10. Whereas, we recognize that:**

One of the main causes of climate crisis is that we have **distanced ourselves from the natural world**, and this *disconnection* contributes to our inability to value and protect nature. **Nature-deficit disorder**, while not a formal diagnosis, *describes* the psychological, physical and cognitive costs of human *alienation from nature* especially in children's vulnerable developing years.

**Therefore, we pledge to:**

**Engage** our members in *experiential* opportunities to *connect* with nature through programs, outings, etc. **Participate, support,** and **encourage** programs that provide *experiences* for children to *connect* with nature and *appreciate* why we need to **protect** the earth.

## FINANCE & CONSUMERISM

**11. Whereas, we recognize that:**

Our **consumer-driven culture** *contributes* to the climate crisis and *produces* little in the way of *lasting* happiness or satisfaction.

**Therefore, we pledge to:**

**Promote** alternative avenues for human *expression and fulfillment*, including meditation, music, dance, art, walks, gardening, and other activities that provide enjoyment and enlightenment while *limiting* our impacts on the earth. **Reduce** our *dependence* on consumer spending: **Reduce, reuse, re-purpose, recycle,** and **reject** (plastic bags, unnecessary packaging, etc.).

**12. Whereas, we recognize that:**

Our **investments** may *well* be contributing to the climate crisis and climate injustice.

**Therefore, we pledge to:**

**Divest** from any investments including credit cards that continue to support human activities which *negatively* impact life on our planet. **Examine** and **divest** from any investments that we have that are *contributing* directly or indirectly to our climate crisis (including but not limited to operations that displace or dispossess Indigenous people for purposes of carbon storage or biomass production). **Provide** *opportunities* to our members and community to *understand* how our investing or use of credit cards may be *contributing* to the climate crisis and injustice.

**13. Where as we recognize:**

**We have a right to clean water, air, and a chemical-free planet.**

**Therefore, we pledge to:**

**Make** informed choices in the food and products *we buy and use*. **Support** legislation that *protects* the environment.

## FOOD

**14. Whereas, we recognize that:**

**Sustainable food production** benefits our *health*, the *health of farmworkers*, and the *health of our planet*. Our **food choices** *impact* our health and the health of the planet. A **plant-based diet** *can be healthier for us as individuals and for the planet as a whole*.

**Therefore, we pledge to:**

**Support** the *growth* of sustainable food production through education, *choice of foods we purchase, prepare, and eat at home and elsewhere*. **Reduce** our *dependence on unsustainable* animal products. **Support** *local, organic, fair-trade, non-GMO* and sustainable **food providers** whenever possible.

**15. Whereas, we recognize that:**

**Food handling** (retail, restaurants, packaging, and consumers) *consumes* nearly half of the *energy* in our food systems. **Where we buy our food, how it is packaged,** all *contribute* to the amount of energy used to provide us with food.

**Therefore, we pledge to:**

**Examine** where our food comes from and the energy embedded in handling before it gets to us.

**Strategize** ways to *reduce* energy consumption when it comes to our food choices.

**16. Whereas, we recognize that:**

**Food efficiency** is *determined* by the amount of energy, land, or water, and resulting emissions of green house gases associated with the *production* of food. Some foods require *more* resources than other. **Plant based foods** often require *less* resources than animal-based products. Our *choices* in the food we purchase can *determine* the impacts of our eating habits.

**Therefore, we pledge to:**

**Educate** ourselves and others in regard to our *food choices* and their *impacts* on resource consumption.

**Make** changes in our *food choices* to *reduce* the impacts of our food choices while maintaining a *healthy* diet. **Explore** *multiple resources* to *gain this education*.

**17. Whereas, we recognize that:**

As much as **40 percent** of the *energy loss* in a **food system** is due to food *not eaten*. Other *losses of energy* are a result of *inefficient* storage and transportation over long distances.

**Therefore, we pledge to:**

**Reduce** food waste, *invest in and wisely use* food storage equipment, and **buy** locally produced food from farmer's markets. **Increase** our efforts to *return* food residues to the earth by *composting* to grow more food to *reduce* **methane** or **pollution** produced by landfills and incinerators.

## **ACTION & COLLABORATION**

**18. Whereas, we recognize that:**

We have the **ethical** imperative to take *action* in the *present* to both *address* causes of climate change **and** *lessen* the impacts of climate change, and that this is our *own* responsibility and not just the responsibility of the government.

**Therefore, we pledge to:**

**Take** immediate action collectively and individually to *address* and *redress the climate* crisis.

**19. Whereas, we recognize that:** Our **individual and collective actions can make a difference** to the future welfare of our planet. (*They always have and always will.*)

**Therefore, we pledge to:**

**Encourage** others to make personal *changes* in their lives in order to address all aspects of climate change and injustice. Collectively, **join together** to *implement* changes in the way we do business whether this is government, private, or non-governmental institutions including non-profits.

**20. Whereas, we recognize that:**

**Progress on climate change** necessitates that we **work hand-in-hand with other religious and non-profit institutions** to bring about *change*.

**Therefore, we pledge to:**

**Network** with other organizations that have similar goals so we can *combine and enhance* our efforts in *promoting sustainable growth*. **Work** with other religious faiths and organizations to bring about *climate justice*.