

(Name of Congregation) EarthCare Plan

Unity Worldwide Ministries (UWM) Fifth Basic Principle states, “Through thoughts, words and actions, we live the Truth we know.”

As a Certified UET EarthCare Congregation, _____ is committed to integrating a comprehensive earth-oriented spirituality in its ministry that touches the entire life of the ministry. The program is centered on cultivating a consciousness for EarthCare that includes both spiritual and practical actions in accordance with Unity’s Fifth Basic Principle. The Green Team defines its EarthCare work through its Vision and Mission Statements, which are as follows:

Inser;

SAMPLE: To promote stewardship of the environment and an awareness of our oneness with the earth

AND

SAMPLE: To envelope and sustain participants for the rest of their lives with a spiritual awareness of our oneness with our Earth home that promotes active care of creation in the areas of Sustainable Living, Natural Resources and Respect for the Interdependence of the Universe.

Through Unity's positive-outlook principles, the board of directors of _____, through its Green Team seeks to:

- A. Promote active stewardship of the environment through sustainable living practices that honor the earth's ecosystems and resources.
- B. Promote a renewed reverence for life, respect for the interdependent web of all existence and ecological social justice.
- C. Monitor, take positions and opine upon environmental issues at the local, state, national and international levels, in accordance with 501©(3) rules and regulations (see Appendix below).
- D. Initiate actions in accordance with Unity’s positive outlook principles, both within and outside the congregation, that:
 1. Educate congregants and the general public regarding relevant legislative activities.
 2. Inspires policy makers to initiate new legislative ideas that support sustainable living and ecological justice.
 3. Educate , support and encourage individuals to align their individual lifestyle choices with values that promote recognition of our moral imperative to care for creation.
- E. Actions within the Congregation may include:
 1. Encouraging a message from the pulpit that recognizes humanity’s moral imperative to care for the environment.
 2. Providing educational programs to both Youth and Adult leader on how to incorporate sustainable living into the life of members of the Congregation.

3. Inviting guest lecturers to speak regarding local, regional and national environmental issues.

F. Actions outside the congregation may include:

1. Selecting environmental issues, developing and implementing action plans that support and promote active care of creation through a better understanding of environmental issues.
2. Collaborating with and supporting other environmental organizations that share the Vision and Mission of the Green Team.

Position Statements

Prior to implementation, positions that put _____, or the Green Team of _____, on public record will be approved by the Green Team Leadership Committee. They will also be communicated to _____ through the Team’s staff liaison person for appropriate review and approval.

Date: _____

Signatures:

Senior Minister (Print)

Chair, Governing Body (Print)

Senior Minister (Signature)

Chair, Governing Body (Signature)

APPENDIX A

Section 501©(3) Can’s and Cant’s for Charitable & Nonprofit Organizations

What non-profit Corporations CAN do (<https://www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/how-much-lobbying-can-nonprofit-do.html/>)

A 501(c)(3) organization can engage in the following activities without violating the IRS rule:

- Non-partisan activities. Your organization may engage in non-partisan activities such as non-partisan voter registration drives, non-partisan candidate debates, and non-partisan voter education, as long as these activities fulfill your exempt purposes.

- Legislative or issue advocacy. Your organization can engage in legislative advocacy and issue-related advocacy, as long as it follows certain rules and steers clear of political campaigning.
- In addition, individuals associated with a 501(c)(3) organization are entitled to voice their opinions and participate in a political campaign, as long as they are not speaking for the organization.

Section 501(c)(3) nonprofits are allowed to engage in some lobbying (i.e. advocacy) without losing their tax-exempt status. For IRS purposes, lobbying is an attempt to persuade members of a legislative body to “propose, support, oppose, amend, or repeal legislation.” "Legislation" includes among a law, resolution, proposal, nomination, treaty, zoning rule, referendums, initiatives, and constitutional amendments that must be placed on the ballot and voted on by the general public. Lobbying, then, means trying to persuade a member of Congress, state legislator, city council member, county board of supervisors, and even a member of a foreign legislature or parliament, to vote in a certain way.

The vast majority of nonprofits use the IRS's “substantial part test” to determine how much they can lobby. Churches are required to use this test. Under this test, a nonprofit will qualify for tax-exempt status as long as no “substantial part” of its overall activities relates to influencing legislation or carrying on propaganda. While the test has never been clearly defined, most nonprofits use a court ruling that a nonprofit’s lobbying is not substantial as long as **less than five percent** of the organization’s total time and effort for the year.

What Non-Profit Corporations CANNOT Do:

Section 1.501(c)(3)-1(3) (iii) states the following:

Charitable nonprofits and foundations may not “participate in, or intervene in (including publishing or distributing of statements), any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for political office.” 26 U.S.C. Section 501(c)(3). This prohibition applies to any and all candidates for federal, state and even local elections.

Specifically with regard to churches, the law prohibits political campaign activity by charities and churches by defining a 501(c)(3) organization as one "which does not participate in, or intervene in (including the to) any candidate for public ...Jul 30, 2018

Please note that the regulation refers only to people who are candidates for political office.

Facilitator, Green Team