

Step By Step: Reducing our Carbon Footprint



The Story of the
Unitarian Church of
Barnstable, the first
Faith-based group to join
the Cape Cod Climate
Change Collaborative

11/18/16 - 11/27/17

Thank you Kelly Esposito from Women's International
League for Peace and Freedom for use of the
FOOTPRINT paintings.



Who Are We?

We are a certified Green Sanctuary, which means that our Unitarian Universalist community affirms the interdependent web of life and works to create a more sustainable local and global environment.

In fact, our congregation, of over 200 members, expresses this every Sunday. We are a welcoming congregation of and for all ages, working for justice and compassion in our world, encouraging spiritual journeys and thoughtful dialogue.

As such, our Green Sanctuary Committee, made up of a growing group of over a dozen, has sponsored many events and programs over the years. For example:

- ▶ Movies, Book Groups and speakers on climate, water quality, food, democracy, etc.
- ▶ Energy Saving Improvements for our buildings
- ▶ Joining local and state peaceful protests for environmental and social justice
- ▶ Leading local efforts to ban single use plastic bags and educating ourselves and others on key legislative issues and candidates



Why Would We Care To Join the 5 C's?



We joined the Cape Cod Climate Change Collaborative in 2016 because:

- ▶ We believe that all of us on the Cape have a moral as well as a spiritual imperative to take action to ensure a climate where our children and grandchildren can thrive (economically, environmentally, energy-wise and equity-wise).
- ▶ It's critical that our nation and all 197 nations abide by the Paris Climate Agreement signed in 2015 and continue to step up.
- ▶ By joining with other Collaborators, across the Cape and with businesses, schools, nonprofits and other faith communities, we can demonstrate how to live in empowered ways as individuals and as organizations. We take personal responsibility for the behavior changes that are needed, not standing still and waiting for federal or global action.

Our Challenge?



In 2016 we sponsored a book discussion group on Joanna Macy's ACTIVE HOPE.

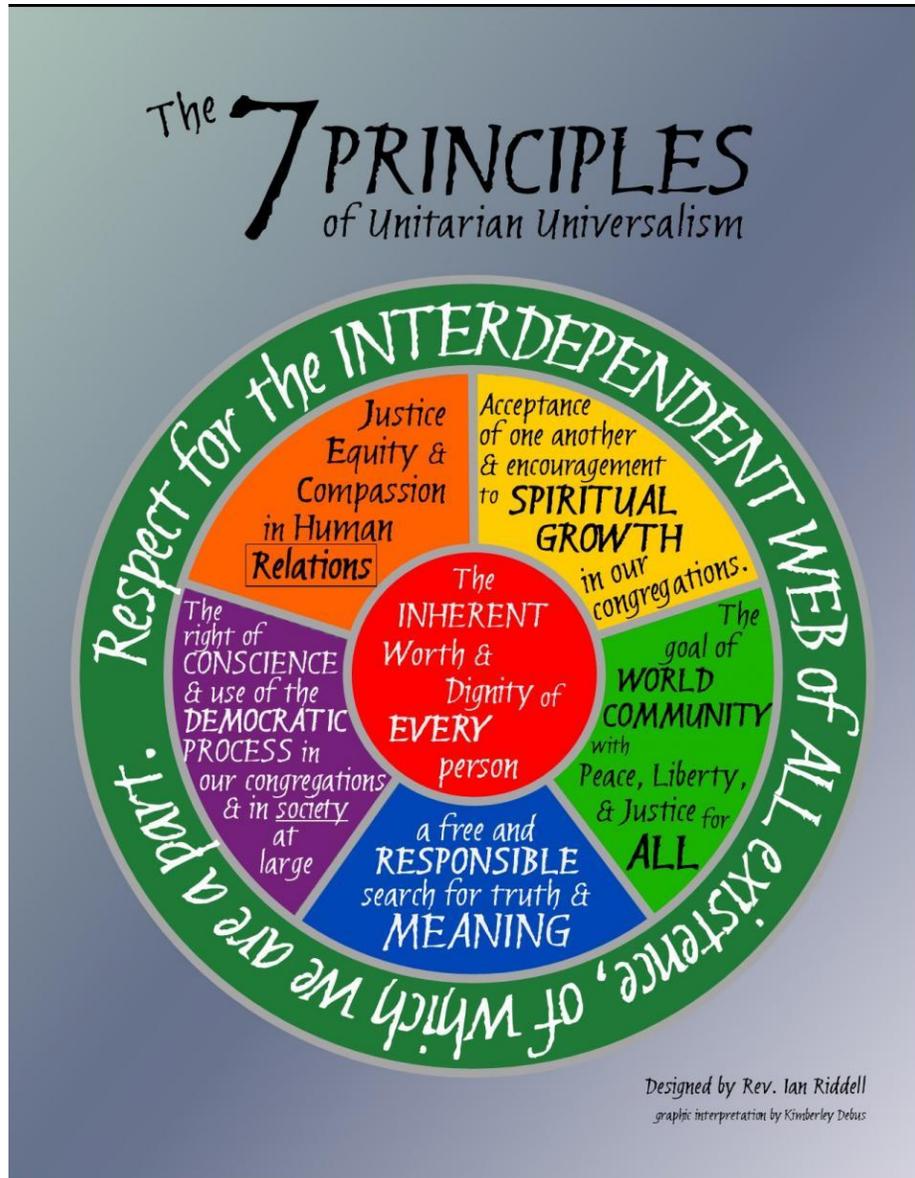
The more we learned about climate change, the more grateful we became for our strong community;

We also learned to honor feelings of "climate despair" and see how to deepen our connection to our 7th Principle: "honoring the interdependent web of all existence."

We became more committed than ever to respond by putting our hope into action.

Yet, we wondered, where should we put our energy?

Our Response: First, the spiritual journey



UU 7th Principle Video:

- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BxNrKij44Hc&feature=youtu.be>
- ▶ You can hear, in this video, our need to respond at an inner, spiritual level, and to do so in community, not alone.
- ▶ Awakening our respect for the Interdependent Web of Existence puts us on the path to live our Principles.



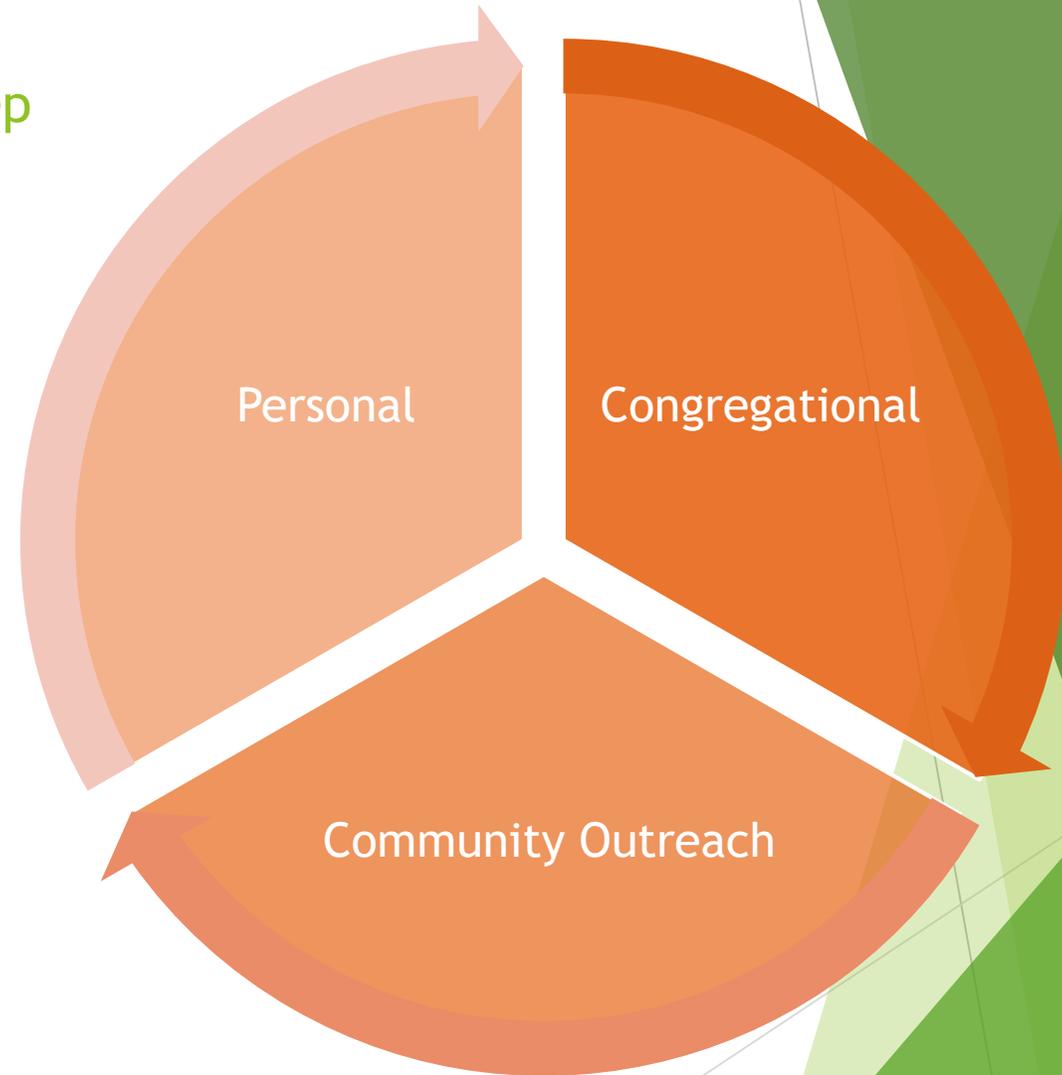
Our Response: Next, Take Action, Step by Step

Personal: we asked UCB members to measure their household Carbon Footprint and pledge to reduce it by getting an energy audit and taking other pledges around Energy, Travel, Food and Shopping.

Congregational: Our leadership approved plans and budgets to

- Pursue Solar Energy
- Upgrade our Kitchen including Energy Star Appliances

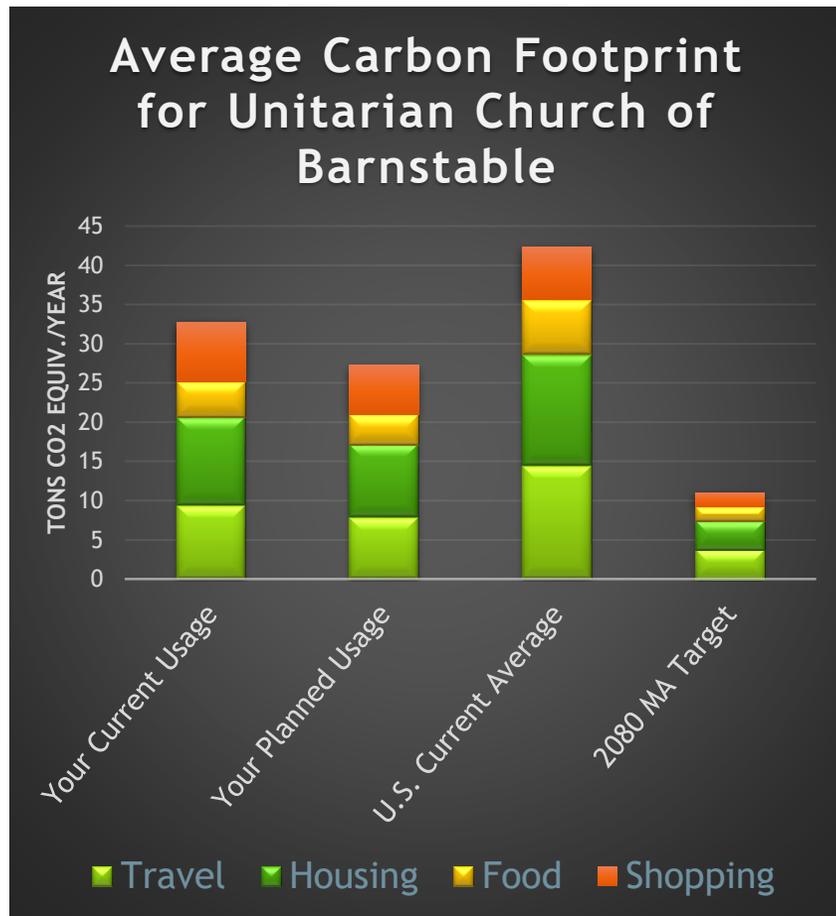
Community Outreach: we planned to offer education and awareness building events on the topics of Energy and Water while continuing to work with Active Hope. We also committed to seek partnerships with other organizations to mitigate climate change.



How's It Going?

Thanks to Steve Gates from the 5C's for technical assistance in creating the graphs on page 7 and 8.

PERSONAL STEPS:



Carbon Footprint Reductions

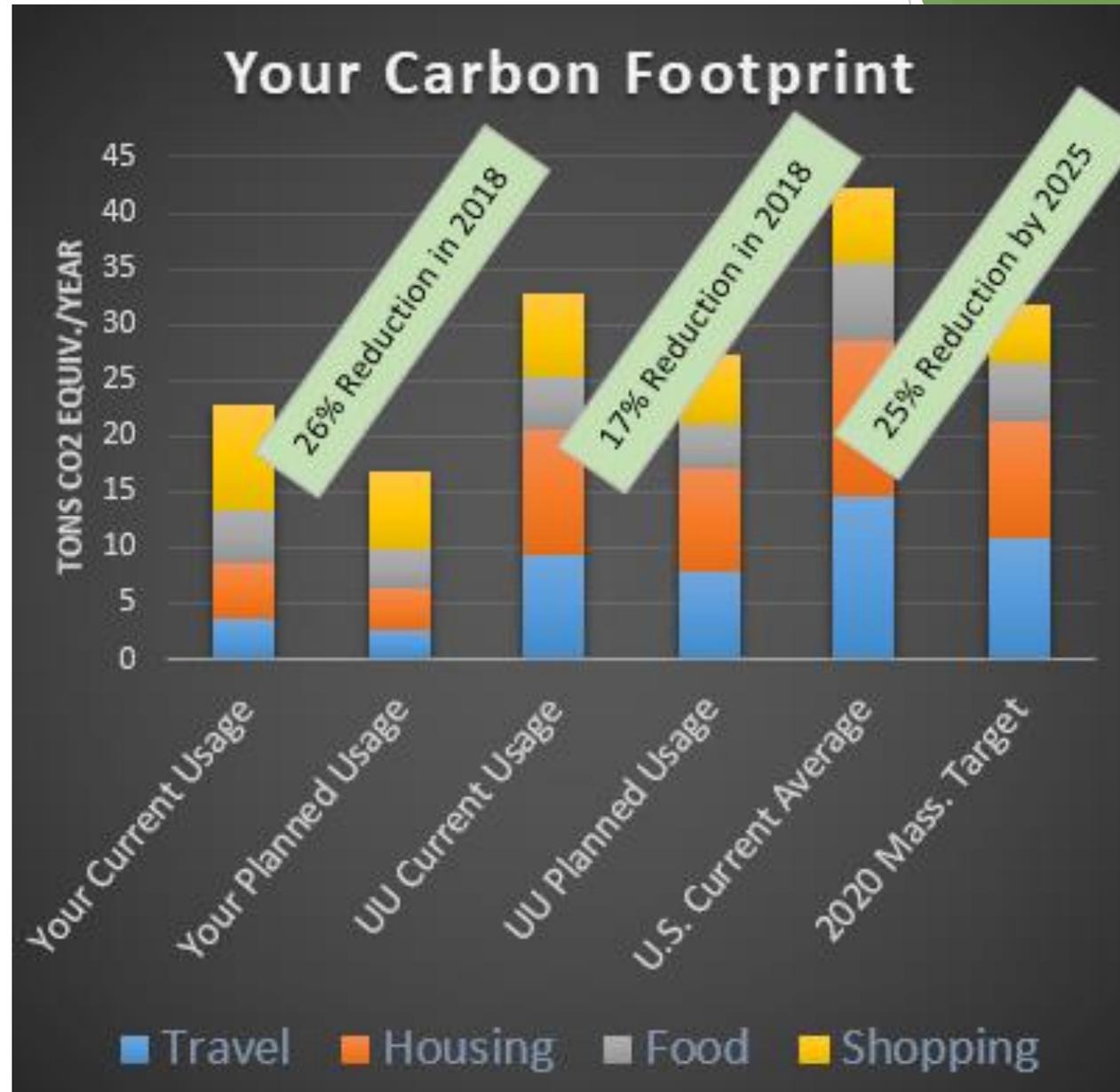
- ▶ Between February & April we held Education Sessions on “Step By Step: Reducing Carbon Footprints”
- ▶ Ultimately, 20% of our congregation sent in their data along with “Planned Actions” for the 1st year.
- ▶ Some families pledge to make 30% reductions while others can only make <5%. Our average is 17% reduction.
- ▶ We’re already below the US Current Average CO2 Emissions & the goal for 2020.
- ▶ On the far right column is the Target for the original Paris Climate Agreement & MA’s goal for 2080.
- ▶ The challenge now is that the US and MA pledged to get to 80% reduction by 2080. To get close takes Legislative Leadership & we have to speak truth to power at the State and Federal levels.

A personal example

Two members, husband and wife, pledged to reduce their Footprint by 26% by purchasing a hybrid, giving one vehicle to their son and using more public transport. They got a free energy audit and pledged to improve their home use of gas and electricity through a number of energy saving measures.

One of them has dropped beef from her diet and both are having more plant based meals. Plus, they do more local shopping and reduced their consumeristic choices.

Note: this chart shows the 2020 Target, not the 2080 Target.



Step By Step: Carbon Footprint Challenge: Our Cape Cod Top Recommendations



Food & Shopping

(Average emissions: 20 tons annually)

REDUCE THIS WHEN YOU:

1. Eat a low carbon diet: increase plant-based foods; decrease animal products
2. Buy local and **go organic**
3. Reduce food waste & trash by 25% and eliminate products with palm oil
4. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
5. Minimize use of plastics, packaging materials and please BYOBag



Transportation

(Average emissions: 14 tons annually)

REDUCE THIS WHEN YOU:

1. Switch to a more efficient vehicle
2. Reduce air travel
3. Don't idle; Turning engine off, then on again is better
4. Maintain vehicles (tire inflation, oil changes, etc.)
5. Take public transportation and/or Walk or Bike



Home Energy

(Average emissions: 13.5 tons annually)

REDUCE THIS WHEN YOU:

1. Purchase green electricity
2. Go Solar (Install PV panels, solar hot water heater) if you can
3. Get a free energy audit from Cape Light Compact or National Grid
4. Turn heat down in winter, up in summer; easy to do with a programmable thermostat
5. Manage the power settings on computer, monitor, tv, etc.



Water

(Impacts Water Quality and Marine Life)

REDUCE THIS WHEN YOU:

1. Conserve indoor water usage by turning off faucets, shorter showers, wash clothes in cold water
2. Purchase efficient toilets, washer/dryer, dishwasher (Energy Star Rated)
3. Reduce lawn, replace with natural features
4. Use organic lawn and plant care products
5. Take care for your septic system so it doesn't add toxins to the bay or ocean.

Get Details at: <http://www.barnstableuu.org/justice/green/html>

Do these in addition to VOTING in support of Renewable Energy Legislation



How's It Going?

CONGREGATIONAL STEPS

- ▶ SOLAR approved and budgeted, 2017
- ▶ SOLAR approved by the Old Kings Highway, 10/2017
- ▶ SOLAR installed in early 2018
- ▶ Kitchen Funded & Updated 2017
- ▶ Renewed commitment to compost and recycle, 2017
- ▶ Educating members about Safe Cleaning Products, TBD 2018
- ▶ Keeping member's hopes alive with Green Tips, Earth Day Service, etc., 2016-18

OUTREACH STEPS

- ▶ Joined with the 2 other Faith-based communities in the Cape Cod Climate Change Collaborative and now co-lead the 5C's Faith Communities Network.
- ▶ Successful movie nights for the larger community on Pilgrim (near by nuclear plant), water & oysters
- ▶ The Active Hope group met a couple more times in '17, then sponsored a North West Earth Institute course on Sustainable Lifestyles for larger community
- ▶ Participating in off-cape activist events with other UU congregations, like "Stand Up Charlie"



Putting Hope Into Action



Reflection: *What would we want others to learn?*



- ▶ **Perseverance Pays:** *we had a goal of pursuing solar for years, but 2017 became THE year to do it, and we had a great cross section of UCB leaders and members that brought it across the finish line.*
- ▶ **Positivity Builds Community:** *we've learned that even Activists get dismayed and never feel they're doing enough or acting fast enough; we need patience to build community and collaborative action (while we hold off on our natural desires to push ourselves and others to step up even more). The earth herself seems to be pushing us more and more as it is.*
- ▶ **Action Makes For Action:** *while it is very difficult to get Cape Cod folks to go off Cape, when we do go and join other UU's (Women's March, West Roxbury fight against fracked gas expansion, etc.), it feels really rejuvenating and healing. We are not in this alone! And we have lots to learn from others.*
- ▶ **This is a multi-decade Marathon, not a short term race:** *to reduce our household carbon footprints we need much more than willpower. We need to demand local, regional and federal policies and laws that support an unprecedented switch to renewable energy. We also need to step up in our local communities and help lead change efforts.*
- ▶ **It's Personal & Political too:** *We each need to change our habits to consume less energy while learning to build more climate resilient communities. AND we have to become active and informed citizens. This is the challenge of a lifetime!*

Unitarian Church of Barnstable Green Sanctuary

For more information, contact:

Susan Starkey, member and author of this story, at starkey.susan@gmail.com

I can connect you with our co-leaders, Carol Ewing and Sheila Place, or other sub-committees in our Green Sanctuary.

Tools:

California Cool Calculator:

<http://www.coolcalifornia.org/calculator-households-individuals>

NEW Calculator at the Cape Cod Climate Change Collaborative (5C's):

<http://capecodclimatechangecollaborative.org/app/Calculators/CCCCC-ClimateCalculator.html>



What's Next?

We plan to focus our next steps on
Consumption: food, waste, water.
Personally and Politically.



Green Sanctuary Committee of the Unitarian Church of Barnstable

Vision/Planning Day 2018: From Left: Back Row- Jan Hively, Lois Fournier, Susan Brinckerhoff, Carol Ewing, Steve Berglund, Susan Starkey. From Left: Front Row- Sue Wall Oleyer, Sheila Place, Rev. Dr. Kristen Harper, Kahren Dowcett

Not Shown: Sue Phelan, Larry Gordon, Erica Jansson, Danielle Herschler, Steve Thomas

