

Why did the UU Church of Davis become a candidate for the status of Green Sanctuary?

When the animals come to us, asking for our help,/ Will we know, what they are saying?/ When the plants speak to us in their delicate, beautiful language,/ Will we be able to answer them?/ When the planet herself sings to us in our dreams,/ Will we be able to wake ourselves, and act? – Gary Lawless in *Earth Prayers*

In 1960, 5% of marine fisheries were either fished to capacity or overfished; today 75% of marine fisheries are in this condition. – Jane Lubchenco, *New Scientist* 2/8/03.

A fourth of bird species are extinct and another 12 % are listed as threatened, as are 24% of mammals, 25% of reptiles and 30 % of fish species. The rate of species extinction is estimated to be a hundred to a thousand times the normal rate at which species disappear. – *Red Sky at Morning* by James Gustave Speth.

In the United States, 91% of original primary forests are lost, 50% of original wetlands have been drained or filled, and 90% of tallgrass prairies have been transformed. – From World Wildlife Fund data.

“Everyone one in the world depends on nature and the ecosystem to provided the conditions for a decent, healthy, and secure life. Humans have made unprecedented changes to the ecosystems in recent decades to meet growing demands for food, fresh water, fiber, and energy. These changes have helped to improve the lives of billions, but at the same time they weakened nature’s ability to deliver other key services such as purification of air and water, protection from disasters, and the provision of medicines. ... Human activities have taken the planet to the edge of a massive wave of species extinctions, further threatening our own well-being.” – H. A. Mooney, Stanford University

“Acid rain and smog on a regional scale, as well as other consequences of these pollutants, are damaging plant and animal life over significant areas of the globe. Depletion of the stratosphere’s ozone layer ...continues to reveal itself annually in the Antarctic ozone hole. And, most serious of all, the build of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere ... continues, threatening societies with far-reaching climatic changes, rising sea levels, extreme weather events and other consequences.” From *Red Sky at Morning* by James Gustave Speth, page 52.

Global warming has grave consequences for people all over the world, especially the poorest members of humanity. These effects include floods, climate change, hurricanes and other severe weather events, habitat loss, extinction of species of plants and animals and many others. With the melting of the Arctic and Antarctic ice, several of the poorest countries including some with very large populations, will be mostly or completely under water.

James Gustave Speth wrote in his recent book, *Red Sky at Morning*, that the biggest threat to our environment is global climate disruption, and the greatest problem in that context is America’s energy use and the politics that under gird it. While the U.S., has 4.5% of the world’s population, our country is responsible for 30% of the buildup of greenhouse gases, much of which comes from vehicle exhaust. This situation is neither sustainable nor ethical nor right. How can we say to any other country in the world, that they need to cut their emissions? Our greed is and will be a source of unrest in the world and ultimately, war for resources, unless we change.

As UU’s who respect the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part, the time has come the time has come to recognize that Earth needs us to change the way we live. We need to bring this aspect of our covenant to the forefront of our spiritual and daily lives. Earth deserves no less.

As UU’s who want a world community with peace, liberty and justice for all, we need to reduce our collective and individual ecological footprints and work for a just distribution of the world’s resources for all peoples and all of nature. We need to understand the true ecological cost of everything that we purchase.

As UU’s who promote justice, equity and human compassion in human relations, we have an immediate obligation to work on changing ourselves, reduce to our impact on the environment, and to get others to join us in our efforts. We must reach out to the greater interfaith community and other groups to multiply our impact. Fortunately, many groups are already reaching out to us as well. If we work together, we can accomplish miracles.

As Gandhi wrote, “We must be the change we want to see in the world.”