



**Wisconsin Conference
United Church of Christ**

St. Stephens UCC in Merrill Starts a “Green Team”

By Gordon Bertagnoli, Creation Care Team member

In the fall of 2018 our church in Merrill started a “Green Team.” This was a generic name that we gave ourselves before we realized that our national church had a formal definition for a Green Team. At some point, our team may work to obtain the formal designation but for now we decided that we would proceed on our own. The impetus for the formation of this team was concern by a church member about climate change plus the fact that the UCC church supports work on environmental ministries. Our pastor, Kyle Carnes, was also supportive and gave us the go ahead!



Announcements were made at church services and in our weekly newsletter, the Interpreter, that the team would be forming and that all were welcome. After these announcements we had 12 church members sign up to participate. Our team normally meets on a monthly basis and thus far we’ve had about a dozen meetings.

After discussion, the team reached the conclusion that the primary focus of the team would be to raise awareness and work to provide our congregation with sound science-based information about climate change. We use our weekly newsletter and slides before the church service to provide our congregation with this information. We also felt it was important to consider other “projects” relating to energy conservation and creation care in general. The team is currently developing a list of those projects. One example of a project was a pollinator garden, which came out of a webinar put on by Wisconsin Conference UCC’s Creation Care Team. In July, members of our team created a small pollinator garden and another small vegetable plot. We plan to use these gardens to help the youth of our church understand the importance of pollinators.

The focus of our team appears to relate well to the UCC General Synod resolutions dealing with creation care, especially the “Let justice roll down” resolution and the resolution pertaining to the Carbon Dividend Act. In 2020 we hope to have a presentation at our church regarding it.

Thus far the work of our team seems to be well received by our congregation. One of our objectives is to actually get a dialog started within the church community regarding climate change and the work of our team. We have started receiving input from church members who are not formally part of the team.