

# Stanley Congregational Church Achieves Certification as a Sustainable Sanctuary

***Church is one of first houses of worship in country to earn this designation***

Nancy Presnell,  
Committee Chair

On Sunday, November 20, 2011, members of Stanley Congregational Church, UCC gathered at a special luncheon to celebrate the fact that the church had completed all the requirements to become certified as a "Sustainable Sanctuary" by GreenFaith. Located in Chatham, Stanley Congregational Church is one of the first houses of worship in the country to achieve this certification. Stacy Kennealy, Director of the Certification Program and Sustainability for GreenFaith, attended the luncheon and presented the congregation with a banner that recognizes Stanley Church as an environmental leader. She stated, "As one of the first congregations in the country to complete this process, Stanley Congregational Church is a strong example for other houses of worship statewide and nationally."

The ten-member "Stanley Goes Green" Committee, which included the Senior Pastor, Rev. Shawn Garvey, was formally recognized by the Church Board in May 2009 and subsequently began the complex process to achieve certification. The requirements were many and varied and covered a number of areas, including Communication (publicity, newsletter articles, eco-theological reflections), Spirit (worship, music, education), Stewardship, and Environmental Justice.

Some of the "greening" activities and commitments our congregation has undertaken or are currently undertaking are:

\* Replacing the forty-watt, incandescent light bulbs in our twenty-three exit signs with four watts of LED lights, changing light fixtures and making other energy-conserving changes in the building, and buying all our energy from green energy sources

- Eliminating the use of paper goods at indoor events and providing eco-friendly, bio-compostable paper products for outdoor events
- Serving locally produced, organically grown vegetarian foods at church events and encouraging our members to do so at home by providing monthly recipes and eco-"tips" in our newsletter
- Using Fair Trade Equal Exchange coffee at church events and participating in a "Green Fair" in Chatham by selling this UCC-endorsed coffee, as well as tea and chocolate
- Sponsoring a hybrid car show for our members, posting "No Idling" information and signs around the church building, and encouraging members to walk, bike, and carpool whenever possible
- Touring polluted sites in the Ironbound section of Newark and supporting the Ironbound Community Corp.'s establishment of a community garden by providing non-contaminated soil and a wheelbarrow
- Establishing a rain garden on the church property to prevent run-off of pollutants into the water system and supporting, as a Lenten activity, the UCC project of water wells in Mozambique
- Sponsoring an interfaith (Jewish-Christian-Muslim) forum where representatives of each group explain the theology of earth care from their faith perspective

Our "greening" process has been well supported by the congregation and we will continue to encourage our members to make changes in their behavior, changes which will exhibit our belief that we are stewards of the Earth and, as a people of faith, are called to care for creation and advocate for justice. Visit the church's website at [www.stanleychurch.org](http://www.stanleychurch.org)

