

**Environmental Stewardship Team (EST)**  
at  
**University United Methodist Church**

EDEN CARE was a group formed at University United Methodist Church (UUMC) in Chapel Hill in 2008 that was dedicated to the stewardship of creation. The Eden Care group evolved into the Environmental Stewardship Team in 2015. We believe that there are small steps that each of us can take that will make a difference, and that collectively we can have a significant impact on protecting our environment.

Activities to date:

- Asked members of the congregation to commit to activities that will reduce their carbon footprint. Almost two hundred people signed the Stewardship of Creation Covenant.
- Assisted in helping the church conduct an energy audit of the church facilities
- Posted regular reminders in church bulletins about activities that can reduce carbon footprints
- Encouraged people to participate in Earth Day activities
- Sponsored activities for children (chore charts to suggest activities in which they could help reduce energy expenditure in the home) and youth in the church who designed posters and composed poetry about conservation that were exhibited in the church gallery
- Conducted a forum on purchasing and consuming local products and supporting the local farm community led by Dr. Alice Ammerman of UNC School of Public Health
- Sponsored two pot luck lunches at the church that focused on dishes that used local products
- Participated in the [350.org](http://350.org) bell ringing
- Sponsored an Energy Fair that displayed techniques individuals could use to reduce their energy usage
- Sponsored a UUMC Church-wide retreat (2012), “Celebrating God’s World, Caring for His Creation” at Camp Chestnut Ridge with speakers and break-out workshop groups
- Started a re-cycling program at UUMC and Placed re-cycling bins in several areas of the church building

In 2014 UUMC planted a community garden and under the leadership of Ann & Jim Booterbaugh the garden has grown in size and productivity. Now called the “Giving Garden,” it produces seasonal, nutritious food for needy children and their families. It has also become a place of fellowship for those who tend the garden. In season, fresh produce from the garden is delivered to “Table” a local organization that delivers food to needy families.

Our focus for 2019 was single-use plastics. We encouraged UUMC members to eliminate single-use plastics, starting with plastic straws. The EST offered stainless steel straws for sale during lent and sold 600 straws to UUMC members. Other incentives to eliminate single-use plastics will continue to be implemented.

EST members have met on multiple occasions with members of other local faith-based communities to share ideas and activities to help us all care for creation.

In the fall of 2022, we participated in a Tailgating Event on the church lawn. One focus was consuming less meat and offered samples of vegetarian and vegan foods. We also had a second booth where we invited children and adults to decorate peace/environmental fabric flags that will be hung at the Giving Garden.