

Good morning. My name is Louise Garrett. I am here to tell you about a new course that the Green Sanctuary committee is promoting, to help people better understand the environment and ways to preserve our remaining natural resources.

The Green Sanctuary Committee is offering a six week program, titled Menu For The Future, produced by the Northwest Earth Institute. This course we will offer helpful ways to eat and shop healthier, while reducing our cost and carbon footprint. Our hope is that you will join us in maintaining the Earth and its environment that we are privileged to use.

Discussion groups will explore food systems and their impact on culture, society and ecological systems; gain insight into agricultural and individual practices that benefit personal and ecological well being; and consider ways to create and support sustainable food systems.

"We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality," said Martin Luther King, Jr, "tied in a single garment of destiny." Dr. King understood the basic essence of ecology, when he said we belong to each other. Now, people of all faiths are beginning to understand that the threats to our environment are the same threats to the principles of justice and compassion.

As late as 2005, two relatively unknown environmentalists, Michael Shellenberger and Ted Nordhaus, wrote an essay, *The Death of Environmentalism*, which caused quite a controversy. They stated that environmentalism was not relevant to our lives and that the environment never makes it to the Top Ten Biggest Worries. There are many environmental issues facing all of us today; deforestation, cancer, energy conservation, and climate change.

Now, with global warming and the looming energy crisis, people are becoming obsessed with going green. It appears that the emphasis has shifted from saving places that we may never visit, such as the Tundra or Deserts, watching a polar bear and the Rain Forest to what we eat, how we travel, and where we shop. Our decisions are affecting the fate of the planet.

You have heard the statements about the "Me" generation. It really is the "all about me" now. And Me as in You, too. This concept is important more than ever now. It is empowering. Me! I can make a difference.

Me, how I eat, how I cook.

Me, how I live, the consumption of utilities in my home, etc.

Me, How I shop, local or drive long distances and often.

Me how I get my food, either grown locally or shipped from great distances.

You and I are empowered when we think about these questions.

Most of you, like me, never worried about tap water, or where the vegetables you purchased were grown as we grew or began our families.

Many of you lived in or visited a country home that had a well on the property to get water, vegetables that were grown in a garden, chickens in a pen, or milk came from the local dairy. Every meal was cooked at home, not ordered or taken out.

Often, we only become interested and concerned about food preparation when we have our children. Many environmental groups have plugged into the philosophy of becoming Eco-conscious.

From the Mother Earth Magazine to the Family Circle magazine, environmentalists have taught the benefits of organic baby food, cloth diapers, and homeopathic remedies. Mothers have become the activists for Planet Earth.

But now as I mention the energy crisis and Global Warming, which has put our planet in peril, these concerns are "hitting home" and we are compelled to embrace environmentalism for our future survival. We can no longer afford to steal from ourselves and our children. We must, as a community, be able to survive and thrive through time. According to the Great Laws of the Iroquois Confederacy, "In our every deliberation, we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations."

Possibly, we are transcending from literal views to a shared sense of moral responsibility and purpose. Many faith groups of people are saying "it is a moral sin" to harm the environment. Every faith group cautions us to temper our cravings for sensational and material things, yet we pursue them additively, vainly hoping to fill an emptiness in ourselves.

It is no longer radical to be a "tree hugger". I was considered to be a tree hugger at one time. Now the way of living has crossed political boundaries, arguments against an environmental agenda, such as cost-benefit calculations and free market choices, are appearing to be disingenuous. Businesses and Politicians are appearing more and more associated with positive choices about a sustainable green environment. Yet, I cannot understand how hosting a Climate Change conference in Bali as a way of reducing carbon footprints, yet these conferences are taking place and are also increasing the carbon footprints.

The reason I have undertaken to introduce the course, Menu for the Future which Green Sanctuary is providing, is to ask that we, all, begin to make changes in our personal lives, our homes, and our community. This is not a one person stance, but a community stance for the betterment of all.

Our belief, in maintaining the environment and sustainable living, has the ability to provide a unifying set of moral principles in our "divided, night and day, wrong world" thinking. We must become committed to the planet, thus elevating our own belief virtues and condemning the destruction of our resources as a vice. Often, not a second thought is given to what is being purchased or how the materials will be used when we are shopping.

Redemption can be as simple as choosing paper over plastic, walking instead of riding a few blocks to the markets, growing a few plants that can be used as food in pots on our patios or balconies. Besides being edible, many of the plants are ecstatically pleasing if the time is taken to look at them.

If we act environmentally, are we not acting on faith- that the choices we make now, today, will ultimately someday, save a panda, a species of wild potatoes, and our unborn children and grandchildren? If we are real about seeking the future generations' salvation, are we not ultimately achieving our own?

We should encourage our children and our grandchildren, to recycle, to reuse, and to produce some of our own foods. I think, as probably, you do too, that we are going in the right direction.

As Neil Armstrong said, "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." When we can each make a small step, together we make a giant leap. The choices we make affect ourselves, our government and our industry, ultimately affecting the world.

I am reminded of the Butterfly Principle narrated by Bob Hayman. Myself as Bob Hayman, always liked science fiction. I used to watch all of the "Twilight Zone" and "Outer Limits" programs on television. One of my all-time favorite episodes was a story about a butterfly. The story took place some time in the future when scientists had perfected time travel. In the story, a wealthy big-game hunter wanted to go back in time to hunt a dinosaur. The scientists cautioned him that he needed to be very careful and not change anything in the past that could affect the future. The scientists selected a dinosaur that was going to die of natural causes for him to hunt. Just as the dinosaur was about to fall into a tar pit, the hunter was allowed to shoot it. He returned to the present, happy that he had fulfilled his lifelong wish.

But the present, he returned to was not quite what he had expected. In the new present, the Germans had won World War II, and the society he came back to was very much different than the one he had left. As he sat crying, agonizing over what had gone wrong, he noticed a crushed butterfly on the sole of his hunting boot. And regretfully, as he was being taken away to a concentration camp, he realized that the loss of this one tiny creature had affected the future. Only a tiny change, but one that - amplified by millions of years of evolution - had made a significant change to the course of history.

Like most science fiction stories, this one was not only entertaining, yet, it also had an important

underlying moral theme that makes us stop and think.

There is, in fact, a true "Butterfly Principle" that goes on all around us. Every action we take - everything we do and say - can have an impact on the future. These impacts may be either positive or negative. The actions may be small and insignificant, but they have a way of being amplified over time.

My childlike faith in people, even though I have seen lots of suffering, leads me to believe in living green, following the admonition of Alcoholics Anonymous, "Live one day at a time." That is really all any of us have, one day at a time. So we should make the best of each day.

Going Green's great strength is the ability to be relevant to every one's lives. But it can be detrimental if we let commercialism control our lives. We must evaluate products, and not be deluded into thinking buying green is living green. We must do our homework.

Green Sanctuary is offering a six week discussion course. Menu for the Future from the Northwest Earth Institute. The course is exactly what the title states, how to live and how to eat well. We can look back to past civilizations, and see how rules were made for people to live healthy and not destroy the precious resources of the Earth.

Even the Halakha ([Hebrew: הלכה](#)) — also [transliterated Halocho](#) and **Halacha** — is the collective body of [Jewish religious law](#), including biblical law (the [613 mitzvot](#)) and later [talmudic](#) and rabbinic law, as well as customs and traditions. Judaism classically draws no distinction in its laws between religious and ostensibly non-religious life. Hence, Halakha guides not only religious practices and beliefs, but numerous aspects of day-to-day life. Halakha is often translated as "Jewish Law", although a more literal translation might be "the path" or "the way of walking". The word is derived from the Hebrew root that means *to go* or *to walk*.[\[citation needed\]](#)

A green sanctuary congregation "walks the talk" of commitment to the Earth by participating in a sustainable life style as individuals, within a faith community.

Ecologist Aldo Leopold wrote, "We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When and if we begin to see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect"

Humans must learn we are a part of the nature, not an outsider. As we abuse our resources, we are abusing ourselves. Our own self gratification keeps us from understanding there is an interdependence, an interconnectedness with every living organism. Gaining understanding of this relationship is the essence of ecological politics and ecological economy.

The seventh principle in UU is "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we

are a part." We must live what we expound.

This is a call to action. To be able to heal the wounds of our planet, Earth, and the planet's people, to restore a balance between all God's creatures, to be able to apportion equally and with generosity Earth's abundance, we must meet every challenge with courage, creativity, devotion and yes, sacrifice on our part. There are many solutions to the problems that face us, but as I stated, one small step at a time will build into a large change.

The guidebook for the course provides reasons for and strategies to change a people into a green sanctuary. Being aware of ourselves can foster greater change. Even though we are aware of environmental problems globally, we often are blind locally but we can begin to act locally. The local issues are our individual lifestyles and changing our mind set can effect guilt. We often meet change with mixed emotions. We are excited about the commitment, while we feel guilty because we imaging that we cannot meet the expectationswe place on ourselves. But in a UU community, with feelings of connection with one another, the congregation can move forward on a guilt-free path.

Our congregation has been accepted as a candidate for Green Sanctuary status. Now we must make that commitment in our personal lives.

The program Menu for the Future is a learning and discussion course. I feel many of us understand the seriousness of environmental issues faced today but we need to support and encourage each other. We are beginning a journey on the path to a more environmental commitment.

Ed Schempp wrote, "Unitarian Universalism is faith in people, hope for tomorrow's child, confidence in a continuity that spans all time. It looks not to a perfect heaven, but toward a good earth. It is respectful of the past, but not limited to it. It is trust in growing and conspiracy with change. It is spiritual responsibility for a moral tomorrow."

There are six sessions. From the Menu for the Future web site:

Session 1 is What's Eating America. Given the array of food choices and advice, eating in modern industrial society can be wrought with confusion, contradictions and anxiety. Session one considers the effects of modern industrial eating habits on culture, society, and the Earth.

Session 2, Anonymous Food, traces the historical shift from family farms to industrial agriculture to present day questions surrounding GMOs and industrial organics. The session examines the ecological and economic impacts that have accompanied the changes in how we grow and prepare food.

Session 3, Farming for the Future, explores emerging food system alternatives, highlighting sustainable growing practices and the benefits of small farms and urban food production. The

session considers how individuals can make choices that lead to a more sustainable food supply.

Session 4, You are what you eat, explores food systems from a human health perspective. The session considers the influences that shape our choices and food policies from the fields to Capitol Hill, and the implications for our health and well-being.

Session 5 is Towards a Just Food System. The readings in session five examine issues of hunger, equity, and Fair Trade. The session considers the role that governments, communities and individuals can play in addressing these issues to create a more just food system.

Session 6 is Choices. Individuals and communities are discovering the benefits of choosing local, seasonal, and sustainability grown and produced foods. Session six offers inspiration and practical advice in taking steps to create a more sustainable food system.

The program culminates with choices, where practical and inspirational affirmations lead to steps which create a more sustainable food system. I hope many of you will purchase the book and sign up for the course which begins February 4. The times are afternoon at 1:30 and evening at 7:00. We will begin our meetings in Palmer Library. Everyone can make a difference.

Thank you for listening and maybe making a change in your thinking today.