

Advocates for Environmental Justice Annual Report to BOT – March 15, 2026

13 Members: Jen Quinton (co-leader), Jim Reeder (co-leader), Carl Foltz, Vicky Foltz, Peg Maginn, Olivia Vincent, Cathy Duchovic, Jan Boeglin, Deborah Roemisch, Chuck Wolfe, Marilyn Miars, Patrick O'Brien, and Pamela Martin-Diaz.

Meetings usually held after the service on the 3rd Sunday of the month.

The Advocates for Environmental Justice were busy in 2025!

We accomplished the following:

- **Adopt-A-Greenway:** This fall marked the completion of our first two-year commitment to Fort Wayne Trails' Adopt-A-Greenway program in which we have been keeping a section of Bass Road, a two mile stretch of greenway, litter free. In 2025, we organized three cleaning events that were well attended by members of both AEJ and the congregation.
- **Share the Plate:** The Stewardship Committee approved Trees Indiana, an AEJ submission, for May-June Share the Plate. We invited the congregation to share their hopes for a brighter tomorrow on biodegradable green paper 'leaves', to be planted with our Tree of Hope. Trees Indiana Director, Carol Cavell, spoke during service the first week of June, after which, we planted our Tree of Hope, a white oak tree, on the front lawn of the congregation grounds.
- **Environmentally Themed Worship Services:** For Earth Day 2025, we arranged for Brett Bloom of Dirt Wain to speak on environmental issues. In October, we hosted an informative speaker from the Hoosier Environmental Council.
- **Participated in the Volunteer Fair:** In August, Cathy Duchovic led our participation in the Volunteer Fair, with an informative display of our activities to date. We saw steady activity at our table, with lots of interest in what we're doing. Five people signed the sheet, and we have gained two new members from the fair.
- **Hospitality:** AEJ hosted hospitality on Aug 31.
- **Just Neighbors:** AEJ helped to provide meals for families experiencing homelessness this fall, by teaming up with other groups to plan the meals, coordinating dessert donations from the congregation, and providing a meal to Just Neighbors for one of the days.
- **Climate Justice Revival/Green Sanctuary 2030:** Chuck, Vicky, and Jan have been working on more community outreach. Chuck met with the owners of Pontiac Street Market with the hope of future collaborations, while Vicky and Jan have been establishing a relationship with Midwest Building Decarbonization Coalition. We remain committed to our Green Sanctuary 2030 goals, and are planning next steps for 2026. Last year we submitted numerous activities to the UUA Green Sanctuary 2030 program, which we believe has earned us recognition as a Green Sanctuary Congregation for 2025. At this writing, we are awaiting verification from the UUA Climate Justice organization that we have achieved this annual goal.

We have some exciting plans for 2026:

- **Congregational Activities:** We plan to host at least one activity that involves the congregation, in an effort to raise awareness of our environment, and inspire sustainable action.
- **Adopt A Greenway:** We have scheduled three dates for trail cleaning. One in April, one in July, and one in October.
- **Share the Plate May – June.** The Stewardship Committee has approved our submission, Save the Maumee, for Share the Plate in 2026. We plan to have a speaker at one of the services, as well as an engaging activity for the congregation.
- **Community outreach:** We are discussing ways to partner with local environmental organizations in their efforts to protect our environment. The biggest area of concern at this time is the Google data center. Our goal is to strengthen the environmental groups in Fort Wayne who are actively working to educate the public, grow their numbers, and influence legislators on behalf of our environment.