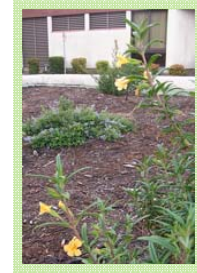


EARTHCARE

First United Methodist Church, San Diego

With the help of dedicated members of their EarthCare ministry, First United Methodist Church in San Diego, California is living out the calling to be a green church. According to Luanne Wherry a member of the EarthCare, "EarthCare was formed by like-minded individuals who care about the earth. We wanted to help our church community and campus become more "green." We started by tackling small projects like selling reusable grocery bags imprinted with our logo and starting a native-drought tolerant plant garden." The purpose of the garden, which replaces conventional landscaping with water-saving native plants, is to educate the community about landscaping water use.



But they didn't stop there! Next they went to work refurbishing the old boiler in the sanctuary and installing solar panels. The boiler and the solar panels were funded by a generous donation from a member. 48 solar panels recently installed on the roof of the United Methodist Center adjacent to First Church in Mission Valley moves the church toward more environmentally sustainable practices as well as saving an estimated \$213,000 over 30 years.

Now says Luanne, "We are stepping up the recycling efforts currently in place by providing more bins throughout the campus to recycle cans & bottles." The custodial staff has carts that allow them to keep the recyclables from the garbage. They are also focusing on how to reduce water consumption campus wide by planting more water friendly landscaping and replacing restroom fixtures with more water efficient ones.

Director of Communications Holly Watt says, "What I love about EarthCare's projects are that they provide wonderful opportunities to share what we as a church are doing with the broader community -- outside the church. The media has been receptive; it gives them another angle for this type of ongoing news." Earth Care has started a green blog as a way to educate and reach out to others. Read it at www.earthcarefumcsd.wordpress.com. For more information visit their website at <http://www.fumcsd.org/green/>.