

GREENING YOUR CHURCH KITCHEN

LEFTOVERS & WASTE

Leftovers

- Plan food carefully for the number of people attending – particularly for a large function.
- Plan what will happen to leftovers. Are items freezable for future use? Could another church function use leftovers in a timely manner?
- Know your local Food Bank and shelters, their locations and their policies for receiving food items.

Recycling & Composting

- Check with your city or county about what is acceptable waste in the various categories. What is recyclable varies among waste management providers. For general information see Washington's recycling site <http://www.1800recycle.wa.gov> or call 1-800-RECYCLE for a hotline.
- Recycle as much as possible. Provide and label recycling bins explicitly and place them in easily accessible, very visible locations.
- Compost appropriate food waste using a worm bin and/or compost bin.
- Carefully educate Hospitality Committees, the sexton or whoever will be responsible for taking out the bins, and any extra groups who use your facilities about your new procedures and why. Ask them for input and help them figure out how to deal with their questionable items.
- Publish lists of what goes in which bin in your monthly newsletter and place copies in areas where people will need to make choices.
- Consider inviting city or county recycling personnel to visit your church to discuss issues and questions. They often will give posters and provide pep talks.

Waste disposal from our use of food is one way we can cut expenses at church as well as bring healing to the earth. Our planet is finite. It is simply not going to be possible to keep throwing away all the stuff we are presently tossing. There is not room on the planet for both our garbage and us. And our garbage seeps into waterways and wastes precious resources. Once you have your system up and operational, you may well be able to reduce the size of your commercial garbage can and/or the number of times it is picked up. Recycling pick-up can be cheaper than garbage pick-up: Hurray!

Several churches are using worm bins to compost coffee grounds, tea bags, and vegetable and fruit scraps. See worm bin instructions at www.seattletilth.org.

Garbage (Un-recyclable & Un-compostable)

- Minimize un-compostable, un-recyclable garbage—and label a small can for that too!
- If items must be thrown in the garbage (ex: food oaked paper plates), stack them tightly to take up less space in the garbage bag.

At St. Andrew's in Port Angeles, we had the city do a "Waste Audit" and determined that a lot of our garbage was recyclable. We decided to build our own worm bin for food decomposing, set up recycling bins at various places in our church facility, asked for another recycling bin from the city, and reduced the size of the city garbage can we used, seriously reducing our monthly fee. If we can make this work, we have dreams of using the financial savings to purchase "green energy." We are struggling and learning as we go!

SAMPLE LETTER TO COMMUNITY GROUPS USING SPACE IN KITCHEN

- **Provide all groups that will use your church space with a letter to inform them of your 'green expectations'.**

Below is a letter used at Saint Andrews in Port Angeles. You may copy or adapt it as you wish.

Dear _____,

In October/November 2008 the Vestry of St. Andrew's adopted an Environmental Policy that we hope will guide our own actions as well as the actions of groups using our facilities. Most immediately we will be trying to reduce our garbage through composting food wastes, recycling what we are allowed by the city, and cutting use of paper products and plastic utensils as much as possible.

We will be placing Recycling bins with labels in places used by our congregation and other user groups (such as the basement and the first floor kitchen areas).

- **We ask that all clean recyclables---such as plastic bottles, paper, and cardboard---be placed in these Recycling containers.**
- **We ask that any Styrofoam cups (or other dishes) be used up or taken elsewhere, and that paper cups be used in the future. We can make recommendations if needed.**
- **Please stack and compact all paper cups and place them in the garbage bin. (Likewise paper plates.) We will be using a smaller city garbage can, so space must be used wisely!**
- **We encourage groups that share food to bring your own ceramic plates and silverware from home. Then take the dirty dishes home to wash them with other items at home.**
- **We will have a labeled 5-gallon bucket available for compost of most food scraps and coffee grounds. Please do not put bones or huge amounts of anything but the coffee grounds in this bucket!**
- **Please be sure all lights are off (other than ones you have been instructed to leave on) and the heat turned down when you leave the building.**

We appreciate your help in CARING FOR GOD'S CREATION (and we hope saving funds as well).

PLEASE, please let us know if you have an idea for how we can do a better job caring for God's precious earth—our home!

Thanks so much for your help.