

Green Corner: Five Tips for Holiday Gatherings

As Christmas approaches, your church may be hosting special events. Whether a party for a youth group, a Secret Santa exchange among volunteers, or a meal for underserved community members, here are ways in which you can decrease your environmental impact.

1. **Use environmentally-friendly giftwrap:** Ask partygoers who will be exchanging gifts to forgo the fancy paper. Instead, suggest they put gifts in reusable tote bags or old newspaper as wrapping.
2. **Consider compostable tableware:** Big gatherings sometimes necessitate the use of disposable tableware. If you intend to use disposable plates, cups, or utensils, look into compostable or biodegradable items instead of plastic, paper, or Styrofoam.
3. **Watch your thermostat:** If you're having a big function, turn the heat down a few degrees. Extra bodies will make the rooms warm and toasty.
4. **Host a gift swap-meet:** Every year, most people receive at least one gift they don't want. A swap-meet gives people the chance to trade for something they might better appreciate. Donate any leftover gifts to a thrift store or related charity.
5. **String LED holiday lights as decorations:** They use much less energy than the old strands of Christmas lights you may have been using for years. Consider being more environmentally-conscious with the newer LED style of lights.

This Christmas season, you can do something good for other people and the environment at the same time. Adopting just one or two of these ideas can make a big difference.