

## **Aurora Presbyterian Church, Conserving in Many Small Ways for a Big Impact**

### **Helping members be good stewards by making recycling easier**

Aurora Presbyterian Church has an occasional Styrofoam collection drive. This helps those of us who can't bear to throw it in the trash & have stored it in our garage, and it encourages others to think about recycling. When one of us gets a big pile, we put out the call for all church members to bring in their Styrofoam. We fill a Toyota 4-runner (one of our congregants is the driver of a 4-runner) to the gills and take it to an environmentally concerned gentleman, who collects it and takes it to a buyer. [Note: Your local municipally or master recycler group may provide an annual round-up to collect hard to recycle plastics and electronics. For more information, go to [www.masterrecycler.org](http://www.masterrecycler.org) or call Metro at 503-243-3000].

Aurora also collects old eyeglasses for the Lyons Club. A container is stationed in the narthex. Someone from the organization comes by periodically to pick them up. The glasses are reground for use by people in developing countries who otherwise could not afford them.

In addition, we recycle ink jet cartridges and cell phones through Recycle First ([www.recyclefirst.com](http://www.recyclefirst.com)). Setting up a system for recycling was easy. All we had to do was register online and they sent us collection boxes. The box sits in the narthex. When the box is full it is sent to Recycle First and, in return, a check is sent promptly. Yes, they send you money, a percentage of the recycling value, for signing up with their program.

### **Conserving in the church kitchen**

To keep some food waste out of the garbage we have a compost bucket in our kitchen for coffee grounds and other fruit and veggie matter left over from Sunday coffee hour and other events. The compost is used in our family garden.

When I organize food events or coffee hour, I use real dishes and silverware, not throw away versions. I've even volunteered to do the dishes for other people's food events, such as Lenten soup suppers and studies. Everyone humors me with smiles and helping hands.

We also sell Fair Trade coffee and serve the Fellowship Blend during coffee hour. This supports the Presbyterian Coffee Project and coffee and chocolate farmers around the world. It's easy to order online and set up a simple display.

### **Leading by example**

We compose/mulch our greens from the Christmas season, grass clippings, and Sunday flowers around the fir trees at the back of the church grounds.

The church recycles its paper including church bulletins. The City of Aurora collects only paper for recycling. We haul bottles, cans and cardboard bottles, cans, etc. to our house & put it in our recycle bin. It's worth it!

Little by little we implement green practices. It is a small number of us who are constantly vigilant and trying to make a difference in this endeavor, but with the culture of our area, the age of our congregation, and size of our church we persist nonetheless. Changes like these do not come easy for many. However, we are ever hopeful knowing that our little drops eventually fill the buckets.

### **Our next challenge-energy stewardship**

The big areas of concern for our facility are poor insulation and reducing electrical and gas usage. We are checking into ways to lessen our carbon footprint and wish there was a quicker fix to these costly areas. There are a few inexpensive things we do right now to save energy. The pastor regularly keeps the church at 58 degrees during the week unless there is a regularly scheduled weekly event, and uses a heat dish for just his office. (This is called zoned heating where you heat only the areas you need).

Provided by Liz Belz-Templeman, Aurora Presbyterian Church, January 2008

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