



Eco-friendly supplies

When we think about carbon footprints, we often think of greenhouse gas emissions from energy use, such as lighting and heating our buildings, or driving inefficient vehicles. Going a step further and considering the materials your church uses can go a long way to reducing our environmental impact.

Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rot¹

When sourcing materials and supplies for the church, think: Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rot. This prioritises reducing the energy and natural resources used to create products, reducing how much waste goes to landfill, and saving money in the long run.

REFUSE – Is this item necessary? Can we do without it?

REDUCE – Could we use less of this item?

REUSE – How can we reuse items? Could we buy it second hand instead of new?

RECYCLE – Where possible, buy products that are made from recycled materials and/or are recyclable. Ensure that recycling bins are widely available and clearly marked with accepted items.

ROT – If recycling is not an option, is composting possible?

In the Office

REFUSE – Do we need to print it? Though paper copies may be useful in some contexts, they may not be needed for everyone.

REDUCE – Can you print fewer copies without running out? Can you print double sided or two pages per sheet? Could a newsletter or pew sheet be fortnightly rather than weekly?

REUSE – Could a liturgy sheet be made reusable by removing the date?

RECYCLE – Could you purchase recycled paper or Woodland Trust or FSC certified paper? And could you encourage the congregation to recycle used service sheets or collect them for recycling?

ROT – Paper is better recycled than composted. Dirty or greasy paper that cannot be recycled can be composted, such as paper napkins (choose unbleached).

Avoid laminating – for reusable, recyclable and waterproof plastic frame options visit durable-uk.com

¹ Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rot is an expanded version of the traditional 3Rs from Bea Johnson.

Cleaning products & toilet paper

REFUSE – We can't refuse to do any cleaning, sadly! However, could you switch from complex chemicals to more natural solutions? Citric acid, white vinegar and lemon are safe and help remove limescale, and salt works on red wine stains. Avoid products with microbeads and palm oil and those that use animal testing.

REDUCE – Limit packaging by supporting a local refill/zero waste shop or purchasing concentrated products that you dilute on site.

REUSE – Could you replace plastic sponges and kitchen paper with reusable brushes, dish cloths and metal scourers? Could you repurpose material from old clothes or towels as cleaning cloths?

RECYCLE – Purchase recycled toilet paper and encourage your congregation to do the same.

ROT – Paper towels can be composted (unbleached is best).

Flowers

REFUSE – Replace non-recyclable floral foam with alternatives such as chicken wire or pebbles.

REDUCE – Could you use more greenery displays rather than out of season flowers? Could you choose flowers which last longer?

REUSE – Collect rainwater for watering flowers and find vases and containers in local charity shops and car boot sales.

RECYCLE – Try to buy flowers in recyclable packaging and then recycle it!

ROT – Compost finished flower and greenery displays.

Could you switch from paraffin wax to soy wax or more sustainable bees wax candles? Find a local beekeeper selling candles or check out church-supplies.co.uk

Find locally grown flowers at flowersfromthefarm.co.uk or ask your congregation for home grown flowers.

Questions for reflection

The top three consumables used at our church...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

We can provide a sustainable option for each of these by...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

For children's crafts, reuse envelopes, magazines, and cardboard and avoid glitter. Check out Be Glitter Free oxford.anglican.org/be-the-change.php

For information on consumables and alternative ethical products visit ecochurch.arochoa.org.uk/resources and ethicalconsumer.org/home-garden

Consider providing a drop off at church for hard-to-recycle items ecochurch.arochoa.org.uk/resources/buildings