

# Green Kitchen at YCUCC

*Yorkville Congregational United Church of Christ strives to be good stewards of the Earth using good environmental practices preparing, serving, storing foods and cleaning.*

YCUCC strives to do many things that are environmentally sustainable. This document lists current practices and highlights some new initiatives. Groups at church who use the kitchen should become familiar with on-going practices and new initiatives.

## Cleanliness

All kitchen workers are strongly encouraged to wash their hands with soap before handling any foods or dishes before, during, and after a food event.

All work surfaces, such as countertops and cutting boards will be clean before and after each use.

## Large Appliances

Stove and oven use gas energy and are energy efficient (EE) products. Two separate units provide optional use by smaller and larger sized groups.

Refrigerator and freezer using electric energy are EE. (Also, the church gets 100% electric from solar panels.) The refrigerator doors have sound tones if doors are open too long. Guidelines for keeping foods are posted outside on the doors.

## Cleaning

Dishwasher is professional grade and EE. Water temp hits 180 degrees; it efficiently cleans dishes used for large functions. Although it is unnecessary to dry every dish, kitchen crews dry dishes to more quickly make the loading trays available for reloading and to get dishes shelved.

The large commercial dish washing system is fairly easy to use. Good instructions are posted on the wall near it.

Three sinks are labeled with instructions for a three-step process for hand washing larger items, such as trays.

**Sink on the island** is used for smaller number of dishes. When possible, a good quality, biodegradable (earth-friendly) dish soap will be purchased. Suggestions are welcome.

**Paper towels** will be used sparingly. Using fabric towels will reduce the need for paper towels.

**Wash cloths and towels** will mostly be used. These will be need to be taken home for laundering by a kitchen helper after a food event. Ask for a volunteer to launder the towels after events.

After general use throughout the week, including Wednesday suppers, towels will need to be laundered. Used towels will be put into a mesh bag hung on the closet door. (A mesh cloth bag will help to prevent mildew, mold, and odors.) On the sign-up board in narthex will be page to sign up for “laundering towels.” Volunteers will take the towels at end of Wednesday evening and return to kitchen on Sunday mornings.

## **Drinks, hot and cold**

### **Coffee**

**Double carafe coffee maker** currently requires turning on the night before to be ready to use in the morning. Without knowing how many people will be drinking regular and decaf coffees, it is challenging to judge how much coffee to make. Some occasions will have leftover coffee that is dumped; sometimes one type will run out. (A new coffee-maker with different/ smaller capacity and different functions may be purchased in the future.)

**Mugs** are preferred over the porcelain coffee cups. Mugs, including washing, are better for the environment. The church coffee cups hold only about 6 ounces of liquid. New mugs of larger size have been purchased and put into use.

**Coffee from “Fair Trade” companies** is preferred. Good quality Fair Trade coffee can be purchased at Aldi. Coffee can be donated by church members. On the Giving Tree, we will add tags for “Bags of ground coffee, Fair Trade source, from Aldi.”

**Used coffee grounds** can be temporarily stored in a labeled coffee can. Building and Grounds crews will distribute the grounds on Tuesday mornings around plants (i.e west side where the soil needs amending.)

### **Water**

About a dozen **one-use plastic water bottles** will be kept in the low shelf of the refrigerator. These will be labeled for an urgent/ emergency use.

**All other drinking water** can come from the tap water, which meets the safety standards of the City of Yorkville-Bristol Sanitary District. In

addition, a pitcher of filtered water is kept in the refrigerator. People using that water will need to refill it as the water gets low.

Personal cold-water bottles and hot-drink thermoses are strongly encouraged for adults and children to use while at church, such as at meetings, Wednesday night suppers, and during Rummage Sale week.

Children in the CE program will be encouraged to bring their personal drink bottles from home. (This is commonly done in some schools.) In addition, a small supply of drink bottles will be kept in the south cabinet for use by kids or adults.

A water filter in the auxiliary sink, north wall, may be preferred for filling or re-filling water bottles.

If church glasses or cups are used rather than personal water bottles or thermoses, the group or individuals using these need to be responsible to properly and safely clean and return to shelves.

## **Food Serving**

A common-sense approach will determine which type of dishes will be used, based on size of event, number of people involved and time frame.

Generally, using the porcelain dishes, flatware, and some re-usable plastic at the church is the better environmental choice.

Paper products will be a good choice in specific situations, such as VBS and Rummage Sale Week.

If one-use products are selected, biodegradable paper products are preferred over any type of plastic. Polystyrene (styrofoam) products are discouraged. However, plastics ( #1,2,3,4 and 5) should be rinsed clean and put into the recycle bin. Polystyrene #6 is collected for recycling at least once a year at church.

When possible, purchase single use biodegradable utensils for special occasions.

## **Food Cleanup**

### **Recycle or garbage**

Food scraps will be scraped into “garbage” bin.

Recycle paper into “paper recycle bin.”

Recycle other items “recycle bin.”

A garbage can will be labeled for “Empty Aluminum Cans.”

Bins are labeled.

## **Leftovers**

Extra foods after events should be taken home with the donor. Or if the donor prefers, the leftover foods may be put into plastic containers and brought to home-bound church members. People there may volunteer to bring the donated meals.

Office Staff bring their own meals and snacks. Do not leave leftovers for staff.

If donors want to leave food(s) for an upcoming event, it is necessary to contact the leader of that event. Do not just leave labeled foods on counter or in refrigerator.

All foods must be labeled and dated, and will be disposed of after one week if not claimed or used.

## **Miscellaneous**

Coffee Fellowship. People are encouraged to contact Fellowship Shepherd if they are willing to donate foods for Sunday's Coffee Fellowship.

*Developed by committee of experienced YCUCC kitchen workers and members of the Green Team, February - March 2025*