

Introduce Zero-Waste Living

Tell your parishioners and neighbors that the average American creates approximately 4.4 lbs of trash per day and that only 9% of plastic actually gets recycled. These stats will likely surprise them and make them curious about how they can reduce their waste. Zero-waste living is a commitment to reducing the amount of trash that ends up in landfills.

Encourage people to start small, where they are, and try to gradually add Creation Care practices as they are able. Here are a few ideas to begin:

1. Encourage your congregation members and neighbors to do a **trash audit**. This will help them realize where their trash is coming from and how they can reduce it.
2. Learn more about zero-waste items like menstrual cups, reusable water bottles or bamboo utensils. These items can be expensive, so consider giving **zero-waste items** to your neighbors and parishioners or to local homeless shelters. You might make zero-waste “goodie bags” and give them away at your next meeting or from your Creation Care Little Free Library.
3. Hold **zero-waste workshops** for your parishioners and neighbors that teach them how to make zero-waste DIYs like toothpaste, deodorant, mouthwash or lip balm. During the holidays, you can even teach how to wrap gifts sustainably without plastic.
4. Host a neighborhood **compost heap** on your church property. Composting is a great way to reduce food scrap waste and lower methane emissions.
5. Organize a **cleanup**. Notice some trash around the neighborhood? Maybe litter and pollution on the local beach? Organize a cleanup and ask a local representative if they’d provide some materials to help you clean it up (like garbage bags, litter picker-uppers and garbage pickup). If your community already hosts those or other events like dumpster days or electronic recycling, be sure to organize your congregation and neighbors to show up and help.
6. Share **zero-waste resources** within your community. Create a list that is accessible through social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Website, etc.) that helps your community easily access local bulk food stores, compost drop-off sites, farmers’ markets, or zero-waste shops they can utilize in the area. Or, you can share zero-waste DIYs, recipes and ideas in a document — nicely printed brochures for distribution around your community.