

# Peace United Church Environmental Policy Statement

We at Peace United Church strive to practice sustainability and improve our environmental footprint. We believe that God gives immeasurable grace to all life and every life, thus we affirm our commitment to environmental conservation. Called by our core values of peacemaking, justice, wonder and gratitude, we agree to engage our community in environmental education and action.

We commit to the following:

1. Conserve energy and natural resources.
2. Use nontoxic and environmentally sound products and practices.
3. Reduce, reuse and recycle.
4. Promote environmental sustainability within our congregation and in the greater community, stating our green business status where applicable.
5. Post a synopsis of our environmental policy in each room, and post the full policy on our website.

Specifically, we agree to:

## **Reduce, Reuse and Recycle:**

- Recycle paper, cardboard, glass, plastic and cans, providing recycling bins in each room.
- Encourage use of washable items such as kitchen towels and dishes.
- Purchase recycled toilet paper, paper towels and at minimum 30% recycled office paper.
- Educate on becoming a zero waste community.
- Purchase items with minimal packaging; reuse paper and packaging; purchase reusable items.
- Promote use of natural lighting where feasible.
- Actively move towards the goal of employing solar energy.
- Purchase low mercury, fluorescent and LED lighting; use Energy Star appliances.
- Donate and acquire used items such as furniture when possible.
- Use sustainable or reused materials for craft projects.
- Promote and provide composting of food waste.
- Turn off lights and heat when exiting a room or when the room is not in use.
- Use low water vegetation, low-flow toilets and sink aerators.
- Use remanufactured and refillable toner cartridges when possible.

## **Become a Nontoxic Community:**

- Use nontoxic cleaning products, dish detergents and hand soaps approved by the Monterey Bay Area Green Business Program.
- Choose glass, metal and paper products over plastic when a comparable choice is available.
- When plastic is a necessity, choose biodegradable, recycled and/or recyclable plastic if affordable.
- Purchase non-polystyrene (Styrofoam), non-foam, non-aerosol, non-PVC, no-BPA, lead-free, paraben-free products; educate on this topic.
- Move towards using compostable plastic bags, as is affordable.
- Recycle electronics, batteries, fluorescent lights, monitors, etc.; try to use comparable materials that do not generate hazardous waste.

- Use no or low VOC paint, nontoxic carpeting and other nontoxic products for all building improvements.
- Use and emphasize the use of nontoxic craft materials, building improvements, furniture and any other nontoxic products in all areas and activities used by children and youth.
- Use lead free, fragrance-free (paraben-free) or natural fragrance candles; fragrance-free or natural fragrance soaps, air fresheners and personal products to reduce air toxicity.
- Use non-chlorine bleached paper products. (recycled products don't contain chlorine)

**Promote Environmental Connection, Sustainability and Responsibility:**

- Incorporate a reverence for life and a responsibility to care for the earth into worship services and religious education for children and adults.
- Organize church participation in our local Santa Cruz County environment, such as advocating for farm workers, beach cleanup, organic gardening, water quality, Earth Day events, etc.
- Encourage the use of local food, products and businesses.
- Promote alternatives to fossil fuels, such as walking, biking, carpooling and solar energy.
- Educate about the benefits of vegetarianism.
- Promote advocating for carbon fee and dividend with state and national elected officials.

Through the course of our work, we shall endeavor to promote these policies within our church and through our work in community outreach.

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