**Congregation Meeting Outline**

**Session 3 – Purchasing: Living Simply & Justly**

**Big Idea**: *Ethical purchasing is relational, not transactional; based on a vision of membership, where community is the smallest unit of economic flourishing*

**Action Item:** Evaluate use and impact of single use items in your faith community and home; and considering switching to reusables (where possible)

**Story:** How and what we purchase has significant impacts on our health, the wellbeing of our neighbors, and our common home.

**Principles:**

* 1. Buy Less
	2. Take Inventory
	3. Purchase for Longevity
	4. Think Relationally, Not Transactionally
	5. Create Share & Repair Programs

**Meeting Flow:**

1. [Prayer](http://www.ecologicalexamen.org/)

2. Sharing feedback on Session 3

3. Discuss and think about the presence and impact of single use items in your community

4. Visioning/planning next steps for your congregation

5. Closing/Blessing

**Discuss**

1. **In our church, how do we currently think about purchasing? Does how and what we purchase align with our other sacred values (such as justice, equity, and love)? What makes that alignment most challenging? What would help?**
	1. Consider holding a book study on Ruth Valerio’s [Just Living](https://www.hachette.co.uk/titles/ruth-valerio/just-living/9781473613355/), and form a plan for talking to your clergy about linking purchasing choices to spiritual values
2. **In hearing about the case study of Hope Church in Session 3, where did you see our church in their story? What purchasing area (hospitality, gathering, groups/studies, or sanctuary) could we begin evaluating?**
	1. Consider learning from Church of the Nativity’s [Zero Waste Church Guide](http://www.zerowastechurch.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/20ActionItems_ZeroWasteChurchORG.pdf)
	2. Consider doing a trash audit – what gets thrown away most?
3. **How do we model purchasing practices in our church that are *good* and inspire congregational response?**
	1. Ideas:
		1. Assess what we have, and buy in bulk
		2. Ask before buying and creating sharing network (i.e. [Freecycle Network](https://www.freecycle.org/))
		3. Create a Repair/Restore Team
		4. Quarterly clothing exchange (kid’s clothes, especially)
		5. Reusable hot/cold bottles with church logo as welcome gifts (stainless steel, bamboo, or glass with church logo) and install refillable water stations
		6. Invite Congregation: One Month Without Single-Use Plastic

**Planning Next Steps**

**To research** this month (assign to participants):

* Where can you buy hospitality items in bulk? Could you consider a wholesale model like [this](https://kingsroost.com/bulk-grain-flour-order/) or [this](https://www.azurestandard.com/) wherein you purchase in bulk not only for your church, but for your congregation?
* What are a few [package free](https://www.litterless.com/wheretoshop), bulk grocery stores in your area?
* Where is your closest [Fibershed](https://fibershed.org/affiliate-directory/)?
* What do you throw away the most in your church, in your home? What steps from Church of the Nativity’s [Zero Waste Church Guide](https://www.ucc.org/history_and_zero_waste/) could you implement to reduce sources (single-use trash) and improve sinks (such as through composting on site or connecting to a [local compost hub](https://compostnow.org/compost-services/)).

**To do:**

* Contact church leadership about your church’s purchasing practices and ask questions about where the items are coming from, who made them, and how long they are designed to last.
* Take stock of what reusable items you already have and ask the congregation if they have any to donate to fill in what’s missing. Make a list of what is still needed.
* Consider exploring approval for minimizing single use items in your church, and begin making an implementation plan for justly transitioning your church and participating families in your congregation to reusables.
* Invite congregation into [one month without single use plastic](https://healthebay.org/giving-up-single-use-plastics-for-lent/) (perhaps during Lent?) and/or include a [“reducing waste tip”](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Gxol3wWPsQBUphbOjPyc0wbAslgHdGU6AhGpYWYGFfU/edit) in your weekly church newsletter that encourages your whole congregation to get involved.
* Celebrate and [track your progress](https://www.earthday.org/actions/act-on-plastic-pollution/), and communicate about it regularly with your congregation.