**Congregation Meeting Outline**

**Session 4 – Regenerating: Soil, Compost, & Waste**

**Big Idea**: *Touching the soil recalibrates us to who we are and to whom we belong. God made this dirt, and made us of it, and loves it. Our flourishing is wrapped up in the wellbeing of the soil.*

**Action Item:** Evaluate composting/recycling practices at your church and home, and explore starting a composting ministry or partnering with local organizations/community farms

**Story:** How does our faith inform how we think about waste? How is composting and minimizing waste in landfills a redemptive act? How do we live in *right relationship* with the land, with the soil?

What does living in *right relationship* with land teach us about ourselves, about God, about the world, about one another?

**Principles:**

* 1. Purchase with longevity & quality in mind
  2. See composting as nourishing for the land, your church, and your neighbors
  3. See composting as integral to liturgy & hospitality
  4. Compost personally & congregationally
  5. Compost as ministry

**Meeting Flow:**

1. [Prayer](https://www.unfoldinglight.net/)

2. Sharing feedback on Session 4

3. Discuss and think about the injustice of landfills and the solution of composting

4. Visioning/planning next steps for your congregation (partnering with [Compost Now](https://compostnow.org/) or [LA Compost](http://lacompost.com/))

5. Closing/Blessing

**Discuss**

1. What is our church’s relationship with soil, compost, and waste?
   1. If you were to begin a composting ministry at your church, what would your first step be? If you compost already, how could make it more accessible to congregants and your community (encouraging folks to bring food scraps to church)? How could you make composting more sustainable for your volunteers?
2. How can we most effectively communicate about compost, recycling, and waste practices in our church? What bins and [signage/labeling](https://www.recology.com/recology-san-francisco/sorting-guides-signage/) might we consider? How can we involve children and seniors? Who would need to be involved in these conversations (clergy, hospitality committee, outreach)?
3. What are some creative ways we can partner with other farms/organizations in our community to help mitigate food waste from going to the landfill? How can your church support your community in composting practices and help them make a just transition from linear to regenerative systems?

**Planning Next Steps**

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

* Where is the closest [composting facility](https://public.tableau.com/profile/olga2630#!/vizhome/CompostingFacilitiesintheUnitedStates/CompostingFacilities) to your church, your home?
* Where are the [nearest landfills](https://storymaps.esri.com/stories/2017/world-of-waste/) and [what impacts](https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/38cf780cb6bd4cfba8dbb9d91b5f44e2) are they having on the communities they neighbor?
* [What do you throw away](https://true.gbci.org/sites/default/files/resources/TRUE%20Home%20Zero%20Waste%20Audit.pdf) the most in your church? Could you encourage your congregation to bring their food scraps each Sunday to divert food waste from the landfills?
* What is a [local community garden](https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?ll=36.04297229383501%2C-77.67547230820321&z=11&mid=1YvB3PuH8jeR_yoFCLvrKOTQQ3p_5NmkK) that needs your support – financial, volunteers, equipment, more land - can your congregation offer space for a garden or compost?

**To Do** (excerpted from [Kiss the Ground/Interfaith Power & Light](https://www.faithclimateactionweek.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/KTC-Screening-Kit-Live-Links.pdf)):

*\*Collective action you can do as a congregation or group of congregations. \**

**Today:** Start composting at home and/or bring your food scraps to church on Sunday

**Next week:** Identify a site on your church land where you could compost or identify local organizations such as [LA Compost](https://www.lacompost.org/) (CA) or [Compost Now](https://compostnow.org/) (NC) you could partner with.

Arrange for your congregation to host a [Community Supported Agriculture](https://www.localharvest.org/search.jsp?jmp&scale=8&lat=33.8144&lon=-117.8522&ty=6) (CSA) grower to encourage congregants to buy from local farmers who care for the soil.

**Over the year:** Find a local community garden through a tool like Soul Fire Farm’s [**Reparations Map for Black-Indigenous Farmers**](https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1YvB3PuH8jeR_yoFCLvrKOTQQ3p_5NmkK&ll=36.04297229383501%2C-77.67547230820321&z=11) that needs your support – financial, volunteers, equipment, more land - can your congregation offer space for a garden or compost? Or [start a congregation-supported garden](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1StbPzR-ZGli8q2bUIjBEEU3sHobo0q9r/view) and composting site that supports food justice in your community.