

Boulder's Trinity Lutheran Church Attacks Waste



The waste reduction practices at Trinity Lutheran Church in downtown Boulder, Colorado demonstrate how important things can happen when adults and youth work together. This congregation has been active in caring for creation for at least 10 years but has really made a concerted effort during the past several years to tackle solid waste and save energy through aggressive recycling and sponsorship of “Zero Waste” events.

In 2008 Trinity held its first such event for its annual Youth-sponsored Easter Breakfast that serves a hot meal to about 250 people. In the past, 8-10 trash bags would be filled. But with the benefit of compostable plates, hot/cold cups, utensils and napkins purchased from Eco-Cycle, this event resulted in only one bag of trash both last year and in 2009. An additional zero waste event was held last fall during their Halloween Carnival in partnership with Boulder County and Colorado Interfaith Power and Light.

Trinity has been sensitive to waste reduction prior to their recent activities. There are recycling bins throughout the church for paper, cans and bottles, and youth are coached on the importance of recycling empty containers. In fact, Trinity's recycling program began as a youth's Eagle Scout project several years ago and the amount collected was the impetus for hiring a private company, Green Girl Recycling, for weekly pick-up of recyclables. Washable cups replaced disposables years ago. To conserve fuel resources and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, Trinity has strategically placed signs around the church to turn off lights when not needed.

Although Trinity does not have a designated green team, their Office Manager seeks out opportunities for saving energy and cutting down on waste. A recent energy audit by the City of Boulder has identified further ways to reduce energy waste in their 80-year old building. Lighting and boiler replacement projects offer two major opportunities to lower energy consumption. Thanks to Trinity for showing us that we can do many things to care for creation by reducing waste and saving energy!