



How to Host an Eco-Friendly Event at Unity Temple



Whenever we host an event at Unity Temple (UT), whether it is for members only or brings in people from the outside, it is an opportunity to act on our stated values of promoting sustainability and avoiding excess consumption.

When planning your event, try to make environmentally sound decisions that reduce waste and avoid excessive use of natural resources and energy. Take this approach no matter the size of your event – a committee lunch meeting or a large potluck. Every meeting is a chance to be mindful and to communicate our values in a consistent way to ourselves and to our community.

Food and Drink

- Know the estimated size of your gathering; organize for enough, but not too much food.
- Send leftovers home with your attendees.
- Buy organic products and fair trade coffee, tea, chocolate.
- Buy fruit and vegetables from local farmers.
- Minimize packaging waste by buying larger containers instead of individually packaged servings. For example, rather than buying individual bottles of juice, buy several large bottles and use reusable cups. Better yet, make your own iced tea or juice from concentrate, and serve in pitchers.
- If you do choose individually sized drinks, go with those in cans. Aluminum is more efficiently recycled than glass or plastic. *There is very rarely a good reason to serve bottled water at Unity Temple. Please use the many water pitchers and glasses in the kitchen.*
- Limit offerings that include meat. Meat has an enormous carbon and water footprint compared to vegetarian options.

Composting

- You may compost food waste at Unity Temple, if you agree to take what you collect out to the black compost bin behind Gale House. Please do not leave your compost in the kitchen after your event; we want to avoid unpleasant odors or pests.
- A complete compost kit with clear and simple instructions is in the blue milk crate in the kitchen. The kit includes attractive collection containers to place out at your event, compostable liners for the containers to make things clean and easy for you, and signage for your attendees.
- Compost fruit, vegetable, and grain waste only. NO meat, NO dairy, and No oils/sauces.

Recycling

- Make sure to recycle any non-reusable food containers that you bring to your event. There are ample recycling bins in the kitchen.
- Recycle any paper program materials your event generates.

Food Service

- Use UT's reusable food service pieces. There are ample glasses, coffee cups, silverware, plates and more. Instructions to use the dishwasher are posted in the kitchen.
- Use UT's cloth napkins and tablecloths. Sign out the linens on the list by the hamper, launder and then sign them back in within 48 hours.
- If your event cannot accommodate reusables, choose disposables made from recycled content that can biodegrade. *Please choose not to use Styrofoam.* As a #6 plastic, it is not recyclable in Oak Park—plus it is nonbiodegradable and harmful to the environment.
- Finger foods do not require utensils; this is a good waste free option.

Avoid Paper Use

- Use UT name tags rather than adhesive tags.
- Instead of paper invitations, use email and Evite.
- If you have handouts for your event and they are more than one page, copy them double sided.

Energy Use

- If it's daytime, flip the lights off. UT has plenty of natural light.