



Best Practices for Meetings

Parishes are encouraged to undertake practices for their meetings that minimize their carbon footprint. Intentional planning of when and how frequently meetings are conducted is an important first step in this process. With new technology (email, conference calls, online video conferencing) the frequency of some types of meetings can be greatly reduced. That said, there are many times when face to face meetings are required; and so we invite you to consider the following best practices for meetings.

Preparation

Most meetings require information of some sort to be distributed. Reduce the amount of paper handouts through the electronic distribution of documents and presentation materials. Instead of printing out copies of presentations for each participant, make presentation handouts available online, or send them electronically upon request (a simple sign-up sheet can accomplish this) after the meeting.

When needed, double-side handouts and print them on recycled-content paper and include a note identifying the percentage of recycled content used in the paper. Avoid bright, fluorescent coloured paper because it is more difficult to recycle. Try to print only the amount needed to distribute. Have a sense of the number of people which may attend, and print only the amount needed.

Transportation to and from meetings adds significantly to the event's carbon footprint. Encourage carpooling for meeting participants, or schedule meetings after another event to reduce trips.

Hospitality

Many meetings offer some sort of hospitality. If refreshments are included as part of your meeting, use reusable cups, plates and cutlery. This may involve some clean-up at the end, but has the potential to greatly reduce a parish's overall waste output.

Serve beverages in pitchers, and offer bowls of sugar and a jug of milk/cream instead of the single serving packets of sugar, milk and cream. When making tea or coffee, heat only enough water as is needed to make the desired amount.

Use pitchers of water instead of single-use plastic water bottles which should be avoided. Of note, in 2006 our Youth Synod voted not to use these bottles at any diocesan youth event. These bottles come with relatively large carbon footprints and many justice concerns. For more information check out: <http://www.kairoscanada.org/en/ecojustice/water/waterfacts/>

Meeting Space

If direction is needed, use reusable or recyclable signs to guide people to appropriate meeting rooms.

Put green bins (where available), compost collection containers, and recycling bins in prime locations to collect waste during refreshment breaks, and to recycle handouts that will not be taken home by participants. You may also wish to reduce garbage bin size to encourage the use of recycling containers.

Turn lights and electrical equipment off when not needed and when your meeting is over. A common application of this practice is to turn off the projector when not in use, or to schedule presentations needing projectors together so as to minimize the energy usage.

Where possible, return the meeting room's thermostat to its not-in-use temperature setting before the conclusion of the meeting.

