

Green Holiday Tips

We are told this is the season for joy and laughter, but for many it is a season of sadness and stress. The Green Team would like to offer some green tips to help you plan for this holiday season.

1. **It's OK to feel what you feel:** Give yourself permission to feel what you feel. Forcing feelings that aren't there will only make matters worse. There really aren't any "shoulds" about it.
2. **Seek sun and endorphins:** If you find yourself feelings blue, be sure to get at least 20 minutes of sunlight each day, preferable first thing in the morning. Take a long walk each day with a goal of 150 minutes a week. Attend a yoga class. Both sunlight and exercise help to fight an chemical causes for your holiday funk.
3. **Help someone else:** It's hard to fee down while you are busy helping someone else. Help with the recycling program, help knit a prayer shawl, attend a class after church, spend time with a friend or visiting one of our parishioners who are not able to come to church, help with meal preparation for the homeless, and don't forget about Sandwich Sunday. You also can volunteer at one of the city's homeless shelters.
4. **Create your own traditions:** Contrary to popular opinion, there are no rules for how you spend your holidays. So if old traditions bring up unhappy memories, start new ones. Read a book on climate change. Do away or reduce your use of plastics. Shop with reusable shopping bags. Eat a plant-rich diet and reduce carbon emissions by 66 gigatons.
5. **Stay busy and avoid unstructured time:** Try to fill your calendar with fun events. Too much time spent alone may bring you to an old, familiar place: down. Look at the church calendar and make a pact with yourself to attend every activity.
6. **Avoid emotional eating:** Emotional eating is a way of soothing your negative emotions such as stress, fear, anxiety, sadness and loneliness. Write out a plan of how to eat in a healthy fashion this holiday season. Eat vegetables, whole grains, fruits and healthy proteins this holiday season to protect you from eating those sweets. Take a plate of fresh vegetables and hummus to a holiday gathering. Did you know that switching to a plant-based diet can help fight climate change?
7. **Draw closer to God:** Morning and night, meditate on a Psalm. Listen deeply. Breathe.

Jesus said, "Love your neighbor as yourself." May this holiday be a time for you to discover how to care for yourself and our planet.