

Genesis of Ann Arbor  
**Green Guidelines**  
(September 2021)

*God showed Adam all the trees in the Garden of Eden and said, "See my handiwork, my creation, how beautiful and balanced it is. Be careful not to ruin or destroy it, for if you do, there will be no one to repair it after you."*

***Midrash Rabba Ecclesiastes 7:1***

Attaining this blessing in Genesis, we have been fruitful, multiplied and filled the earth. (Gen. 1:28). At the same time, we have subdued it and we have tilled it (Gen. 1:28, 2:15) and done that, while sometimes for survival, also too often for comfort. Our planet Earth needs repair.

Genesis of Ann Arbor has developed these guidelines as part of our efforts to combat climate change, climate volatility and promote stewardship of our shared environment. Through these guidelines and associated actions, Genesis joins with organizations and governments across this nation to reduce global warming and the harmful impacts to public health and the environment that are now occurring.

One of the guiding principles in the Genesis Covenant Renewal Document is *"Responsible Stewardship. We use and care for the building wisely. We consider the environment when making purchases and improvements."* As an aspirational project that expands on these covenant principles, this document provides greater detail on suggested actions that we can take to guide our shared actions to be more environmentally responsible. Stewardship is about taking the right action. This document details suggested actions that will help to reduce our building's energy footprint and our building's impact on the environment.

Most notably, we have ourselves formed an environmentally responsible home for prayer, education, celebration and all the things we do together and as congregations. The mere fact that St. Clare's Episcopal Church and Temple Beth Emeth share our building reduces our energy footprint. This is because baseline energy use is much less for one building than it would be if we were housed in separate facilities. As guided by a comprehensive energy audit, we have installed more efficient heating and cooling systems, improved indoor air quality and installed more energy efficient windows. We have minimized our reliance on fossil fuel generated electricity by installing solar panels and installing LED lighting. Of this we feel justly proud.

Now, with the same dedication, it is time to work toward additional environmentally responsible practices for the use of our shared home.

Whenever possible, Genesis will make purchases and use decisions at least partly based on environmental considerations (e.g., , what impact does this decision have on perpetuating or preventing global warming?) for Genesis’s use of products and services. These products and services include, among others, supplies and services used by the Genesis office, during Genesis events, those events held by renters, for building cleaning and maintenance, in the kitchens and for landscaping. To that end, we adopt the following guidelines for Genesis of Ann Arbor:

- complying and cooperating with the City of Ann Arbor’s A2Zero plan for achieving a just transition to community-wide carbon neutrality by 2030. See [Carbon Neutrality Home \(a2gov.org\)](https://a2gov.org),
- reducing Genesis’s use of depletable energy resources (e.g., Exploring the availability and the affordability of renewable energy sources and carbon offsets. Consider subscribing to these energy sources / offsets),
- increasing Genesis’s use of recycled and recyclable materials and supporting recycling markets,
- reducing Genesis’s contributions to landfills,
- choosing contractors who use environmentally preferred products
- conserving water, and
- reducing or eliminating Genesis’s use of toxic substances and increasing Genesis’s use of biodegradable cleaning supplies.

Achieving these goals may be incremental and will require modification over time. These modifications will be based on our shared experiences and the improved technologies that become available for protecting the environment. It is suggested that these guidelines be reviewed periodically by the Genesis Board and to provide guidance about further actions.

To implement these guidelines, the Genesis Board has created and approved two companion documents, with the input of the TBE Dayenu group:

- (1) A guidebook for the Genesis staff to suggest environmentally responsible practices, including a plan for environmentally preferable purchasing of products and services (“the EPP Plan”); and
- (2) A shorter guideline intended specifically for planning of religious, educational and social events in our shared building (“the Genesis-Together Plan”). This guideline will be provided to prospective renters of our building.

The EPP Plan is in Exhibit A to this document; the Genesis-Together Plan is in Exhibit B.

We do not pretend to have all the answers, or even a fully operational set, for using our shared building and conducting building activities in environmentally responsible ways. But we believe that Genesis's environmental footprint can and should be reduced. We therefore need to learn more about the ecological consequences of our choices and the variety of environmentally responsible alternatives available to us. This will be a journey.

**Adopted by the Genesis Board on: 28-SEP-2021**

**Genesis of Ann Arbor's  
Green Procedures Manual And Plan for Environmentally Preferable Purchasing  
(September 2021)**

**Introduction**

This manual is a work in progress. It should always be a work in progress. As we gain experience, as technologies change and as green services and products become more available and more affordable, this manual will become outdated unless continually updated.

Much of the content of this guideline is modeled on Ann Arbor's A2Zero plan, see [A2Zero-Climate-Action-Plan- 3.0.pdf \(a2gov.org\)](https://www.a2gov.org/a2zero-climate-action-plan-3.0.pdf).

In addition, for the past decade, the federal General Services Administration and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency have issued procurement guidelines for recycled and environmentally responsible products and services, on which this plan also relies. See <https://www.gsa.gov/governmentwide-initiatives/climate-action-and-sustainability>.

This document is not short, and over time, we hope it will become longer. Part of its purpose is to emphasize the breadth of choices we make that carry environmental consequences. It is also intended as a resource guide for further learning. We also hope that over time the guidelines suggested in this manual will become policies.

**Environmentally Preferable Purchasing & Procedures**

**1. Energy Efficiency**

The following practices, while aspirational, will help us minimize both our consumption of energy resources and the environmental effects attributable to their use.

- 1.1 Heating and cooling rooms based on actual use, to the extent that current HVAC systems permit this level of detailed control.
- 1.2 Over time, shifting to the use of occupancy sensors and programmable thermostats to adjust temperature targets to reduce energy use in unoccupied spaces, in part, based on zoned systems.
- 1.3 Notifying a building attendant when a room is uncomfortably warm or cold, so that the HVAC system can be adjusted as needed.
- 1.4 Keeping doors and windows closed when the HVAC system is running. The system will bring in fresh, filtered air.
- 1.5 Turning on *power-save* modes on equipment and appliances and choosing ENERGYSTAR equipment and appliances.

## Appendix A: Green Procedures Manual and EPP Plan

- 1.6 Turning off equipment during nights and weekends; this includes TVs, radios, computers, monitors, etc. If available, equipment settings that use power save or sleep mode should be used.
- 1.7 Making sure that furniture placement does not inhibit air circulation or HVAC effectiveness.
- 1.8 Using energy-efficient LED bulbs, occupancy sensors and dimmable switches to adjust lighting to lower levels when that is sufficient.
- 1.9 Recycling rechargeable and lithium batteries; using rechargeable batteries instead of alkaline. Choose products and appliances that require rechargeable batteries.
- 1.10 Track energy and water use in EnergyStar Portfolio manager or a similar web application, to measure the impact of implementing energy saving improvements.
- 1.11 When purchasing new appliances and heating systems, consider the use of electricity over natural gas. Both the production and burning of natural gas generate greenhouse gases, which is not the case when renewable energy sourced electricity is used in electrical appliances and heating.

### **2. Transportation**

We can reduce our use of fossil fuels and emissions by:

- 2.1 Establishing and encouraging carpools for transportation to and from Genesis and other events in our shared building.
- 2.2 Suggesting a non-idling policy for cars waiting for, picking up and dropping off passengers at our building.
- 2.3 Encouraging people to walk or bike to Genesis, reminding them of the availability of bike racks at the front and back doors bike locking stands.
- 2.4 Encouraging the use of public transportation by making bus schedules and routes available.

### **3. Environmentally Preferred Purchasing: Performance, Price and Availability**

Nothing contained in this guideline requires or should be construed as requiring Genesis or its members to purchase or use products or services that do not perform adequately for their intended use or are not available at a reasonable price and in a reasonable time frame.

This manual contains only a few required considerations / guidelines for our staff and renters:

- (1) Environmental considerations shall be considered, where practical, as a factor in decision making in as many areas as possible, including but not limited to supplies and services use for the Genesis office, Genesis events, building renters, building cleaning and maintenance, the kitchens and landscaping.

This manual also recommends converting the following additional items from guidelines to requirements:

- (2) Use of 100% recycled paper with Post-Consumer Waste (PCW) content for in-house print and copy jobs. See below.
- (3) Use industrial and institutional cleaning products that meet Green Seal Certification or have been recommended by the U.S. EPA, Environment Canada or an equivalent body. See below.
- (4) Use of janitorial paper products that contain a minimum of 50% recycled (PCW) content. See below.
- (5) Use of trash bags made from 100% recycled plastic content. See below.

#### **4. Waste Created by Paper and Office Products**

Using paper with at least some recycled content is environmentally friendly. Production of recycled paper uses less water, less energy and produces less air and water pollution than paper production using raw materials.

The EPA has comprehensive procurement guidelines for office paper products and recommends purchasing paper processed chlorine free and containing a minimum of 30% recycled content. <http://tinyurl.com/2pymtj>. See also [Standard GS-7 | Green Seal](#).

The environmental impact of the operations of our staff office and our shared copy machine would be significantly reduced by training people to:

- 4.1 Continue to minimize or eliminate printing, paper mailings, single sided coping, colored paper and the use of non-recycled paper.
- 4.2 Editing documents on screen as much as possible to avoid printing multiple drafts.
- 4.3 Choosing refillable, recycled toner cartridges.

- 4.4 Conserving ink and toner by printing at “standard” or “fast” rather than “high” quality print settings.
- 4.5 Continuing to use 100% recycled paper with Post-Consumer Waste (PCW) content for in-house print and copy jobs, with a goal of moving exclusively toward paper with 100% PCW content.
- 4.6 Minimizing the use of colored paper (because it is more difficult to recycle), and, when colored paper is used, using recycled content colored paper.
- 4.7 Choosing nontoxic water-based highlighters and markers.
- 4.8 Choosing energy efficient office machines. EPEAT, [EPEAT Registry](#), is a tool to help purchasers evaluate, compare and select desktop computers, notebooks and monitors based on their environmental attributes.

## **5.0 Food and Food Service Procedures**

In the area of food service, we can minimize harms to the environment by:

- 5.1 Reducing the use of packaging that must be landfilled by buying in bulk, avoiding sugar and powder creamer in individual packets and storing food in reusable glass containers. Note that for boxed pizza and other boxed foods, which cannot be recycled due to grease covering the cardboard, may be composted.
- 5.2 Continue using re-usable spoons for coffee and tea rather than plastic stirrers. Assure that caterers are aware of this suggestion.
- 5.3 Reduce the use of single-use plates and cutlery. Instead, use and wash China plates, cups and bowls. Assure that caterers are aware of this suggestion.
- 5.4 Not using Styrofoam products.
- 5.5 Reducing the use of paper napkins, tablecloths and decorations and, when paper is used, choosing paper goods made with recycled content.
- 5.6 Using cloth rather than paper towels in the kitchen. Caterers should be asked to use cloth rather than plastic tablecloths.
- 5.7 Making reusable service items and decorations the primary choice.

- 5.8 Purchasing and providing storage for up to 200 re-usable service settings (China, glassware) for community use. Note that silverware and cutlery may be available on request from TBE and STC.
- 5.9 Washing dishes and utensils and, when possible, pots and pans in the dishwasher, rather than by hand, to conserve water.
- 5.10 Purchasing fair-trade organic coffee and encouraging the purchase of organic or preservative / chemical free, healthier food wherever food is served.

## **6. Waste Disposal**

What we put in the trash, how much we put in the trash and how we dispose of it affects air, water and soil quality, as well as our own health and the health of other living things. There are four basic and essential strategies for minimizing and managing our waste:

- Waste reduction should be number one strategy! Don't buy more than you need.
- Re-usable dishware is better than single-use products because you can't compost or recycle them.
- If reusable dishware is not workable, using recyclable dishware is the next best option. Landfill disposal is the least environmentally friendly option.
- For materials that are toxic, carcinogenic, flammable, persist in the environment, follow the current local guidelines for safe disposal.

The following steps will reduce the waste that results from Genesis's activities:

- 6.1 Instituting a comprehensive recycling program for paper, cardboard, glass, metals, plastic tubs and bottles. Recyclable plastics have bottoms that are clearly marked with numbers (e.g., #3). Follow the current local guidelines for proper disposal of these items, based on these numbers. Trash or compostable items are **not** recyclable.
- 6.2 Placing paper recycling bins in each room in all classrooms and offices and bins for cans and glass on each floor and in the kitchens. Recycle plastic film and bags that are clean and dry by placing them in the recycle container located in the coat room.
- 6.3 When plastic trash bags are necessary, choosing bags made from recycled plastic content, preferably 100% RPPCM (recycled plastic postconsumer material).



- 6.4 Recycling printer and toner cartridges and other office consumables and choosing remanufactured or recycled ink and toner cartridges.
- 6.5 Donate or recycle used electronic equipment. The U.S. EPA has a web page dedicated to “Where Can I Donate or Recycle My Old Computer and Other Electronics Products?” [Electronics Donation and Recycling | US EPA](#). Electronics can be recycled at the Drop-off Station located at 2950 E. Ellsworth Rd, Ann Arbor, for a small fee. See [www.recycleannarbor.org](http://www.recycleannarbor.org) for more information.
- 6.6 Fluorescent bulbs can be recycled at the Drop-off Station located at 2950 E. Ellsworth Rd, Ann Arbor, for a small fee. See [www.recycleannarbor.org](http://www.recycleannarbor.org) for more information. Drop-off locations for recycling fluorescent bulbs (and other recyclables) can also be searched by zip code at [Recycling Center Search - Earth911.com](#).
- 6.7 Collecting and returning packing peanuts and bubble wrap to a mailing store or taken to the Drop Off Station located at 2950 E. Ellsworth Rd, Ann Arbor.
- 6.8 Safely disposing of batteries, cleaning products, paint and paint thinner, fuels and oils, drain cleaners, antifreeze and other toxins. This means not placing them in the trash. For safe and local disposal of these items, see the website of the Water Resources Washtenaw County website: <https://www.washtenaw.org/287/Home-Toxics-Paint-Oil-Pesticides-More> located at 705 N. Zeeb Rd, Ann Arbor, call 734-222-3950 to make an appointment for drop off, or visit [Recycling Center Search - Earth911.com](#).

## **7.0 Cleaning and Maintenance Supplies and Services**

Traditionally, general and special purpose cleaning products have contained surfactants, detergents, antibacterial chemicals and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that are toxic or hazardous, carcinogenic, flammable and / or not biodegradable. These substances are often hazardous to the workers using them. It is estimated that each year, six out of every 100 professional janitors are injured by the chemicals they use. Tons of these substances are poured down drains of every year, polluting water supplies and soil. They also affect interior air quality.

Genesis can reduce the harms to its members and staff and the environment by:

- 7.1 Choosing Certified Green Seal cleaning products <http://www.green seal.org/>, or products recommended by the U.S. EPA or Environment Canada, see [www.epa.gov/dfc/pubs/projects/formulat/formpart.htm#iiclean](http://www.epa.gov/dfc/pubs/projects/formulat/formpart.htm#iiclean) and <http://tinyurl.com/37oad4>. These web sites have very extensive and growing lists of safer products.

It is estimated that for 13 out of 14 product types, we could use environmentally preferable products in place of existing products with no increased cost, while the United States Department of Energy's Pacific Northwest National Laboratory found that green cleaning products cost less than what they paid for non-green cleaning products.

- 7.2 Using minimum amounts, where cleaning or disinfecting products containing toxic substances must be used and disposing of containers and remainders properly. Use of natural vinegar and herbs for cleaning / disinfecting is much safer and environmentally friendly.
- 7.3 Training staff with respect to the safe use of safer, environmentally friendly products should be done.
- 7.4 Requiring contracted cleaning services to use industrial and institutional cleaning products that meet Green Seal Certification or have been recommended by the U.S. EPA, Environment Canada or an equivalent body.
- 7.5 Require that janitorial paper products contain a minimum of 50% recycled (PCW) content.
- 7.6 Use latex Recycled and/or low-VOC or zero-VOC paints to mitigate disposal challenges and reduce risks to human health and the environment.
- 7.7 Choose carpeting with high recycled content, low VOCs and with minimal integral adhesives.
- 7.8 Choose furniture that has been tested for, or does not emit, chemicals or particles that negatively affect indoor air quality. See general guidelines on [www.greenguard.org](http://www.greenguard.org).
- 7.9 For on-going maintenance, use minimal VOC construction adhesives and sealers.
- 7.10 Implement effective and environmentally sensitive Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategies that emphasize control of pests and their damage through preventive practices, mechanical and biological controls and cultivation of pest-resistant plantings. Resort to herbicides, pesticides and rodenticides only as required and with the least possible exposure to humans, plants and animals. See [Smart Pest Control to Protect Your Health | US EPA](#) and [www.birc.org](http://www.birc.org).

## **8.0 Landscaping**

Landscaping, which often requires water and creates waste, need not do either.

Genesis can minimize both by:

- 8.1 Planting drought-tolerant plants native or appropriate to the local area and climate.
- 8.2 Managing pest problems through prevention and physical, mechanical and biological controls (Integrated Pest Management).
- 8.3 Appropriate pruning, See: [www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/SUL5.pdf](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/SUL5.pdf) and [www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/SUL7.pdf](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/SUL7.pdf), from the University of Iowa Extension Service's series on "Sustainable Urban Landscapes."
- 8.4 Using organic fertilizers.
- 8.5 Using healthy plant debris for composting.

## **9.0 Implementation**

This guidance document is intended for implementing the preceding suggestions at Genesis of Ann Arbor. Implementation of these guidelines is to begin immediately, through the education of staff and renters.

## **10.0 Definitions**

**Energy Star** refers to the U.S. EPA's energy efficiency product labeling program described at <http://www.energystar.gov>.

**Environmentally preferable products and services** are products and services that have a lesser or reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared to competing products and services that serve the same purpose.

**Green Seal** is an independent, non-profit organization that develops standards for sustainable, environmentally responsible products and services and certifies "Green Seal" products and services that meet those standards. See <http://www.greenseal.org/> for information on the organization's programs and standards.

**Postconsumer Recovered Material** is defined by the EPA as material that is recycled after completing its life as consumer item. It is finished material that would normally be disposed of by consumers (end-users) as solid waste but has been diverted or recovered from the solid waste stream and becomes postconsumer waste content (PCW) when recycled into new items.

**Pre-Consumer Recovered Material** is defined by the EPA as material that is recovered before it is sold to or used by a consumer – for instance, scrap left over from manufacturing processes that is recovered by the manufacturer before it leaves the plant.

**Processed Chlorine Free (PCF)** means a product produced using no chlorine or chlorine derivatives.

**Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)** are organic (carbon-based) compounds that significantly vaporize under normal conditions. They may react with other pollutants in the presence of sunlight. Paints and paint thinners often contain VOCs. They may also be generated by photocopiers, carpets and furniture.

# **GENESIS GREENING**

## **Environmentally Preferred Genesis-Together Plan**

### **“Genesis Greening - building to reduce carbon emissions - all together.”**

In consideration of our shared values on environmental stewardship, this Genesis-Together Plan serves to inform and guide decision-making, as it relates to events held in our building.

Importantly, we view these guidelines as an opportunity to educate and inspire staff, congregants and guests as to the shared sustainability values that are at the heart of our Genesis community. In doing so, may we be inspired to bring these values out into our work and home environments as well and truly live as stewards of the earth.

### **Areas to Consider Greening and Steps to Get Us There:**

#### **INVITATIONS**

- Print invitations on recycled paper with the maximum amount of post-consumer waste content available. Encourage guests to recycle invitations.
- Avoid lined envelopes; consider post-card style invitations; ask for replies to phone or email account rather than including a separate reply card. Print with low-toxic dyes or soy ink, double-sided where possible.
- Consider eliminating paper invitations altogether and using an on-line invitation program such as Evite; or consider Evite for events surrounding the main event or as a "Save-the-Date". Alternatively, an event website can be used to manage invitation and replies.

#### **EVENT BOOKLETS**

- Consider eliminating printed booklet and prepare a poster-size display of photos, quotes, poems, etc. to be available for viewing at the event.
- Use electronic viewing options, e.g., monitors, phone and iPad applications.
- If preparing leaflets, print on recycled paper with the maximum amount of post-consumer waste content available. Print with low-toxic dyes or soy ink, double-sided as possible. Recycle following the event.

#### **ROOM / TABLE DECORATIONS**

- Consider centerpieces that can be donated or re-used.
- Consider reusable table linens first and paper next. Avoid plastic where possible, or choose plastic made with recycled content.
- If using balloons, consider latex first and make sure balloons are responsibly discarded after use.

## **FOOD AND FOOD SERVICE**

- Minimize food waste by making sufficient food for the planned number of attendees. Avoid preparing more food than is needed to reduce leftover food. Consider donating unopened shelf-stable food to a local food pantry (kitchen), such as our Back Door Food Pantry.
- Serve fair-trade organic coffee and consider the use of organic or preservative / chemical free, healthier food where possible.
- Consider the use of locally grown food and/or food that is minimally processed, packaged and shipped long distances.
- Choose service items including serving pieces, plates, napkins, cups, silverware with these considerations:
  - 1) Consider first using reusable service items wherever it is practical and cost effective to do so. Genesis can provide service for no more than 200 Guests (note that Genesis does have shared silverware or serving pieces; the individual congregations may be able to provide these upon request); event organizers / caterers are responsible for coordinating washing and restoring of service items used.
  - 2) Consider cloth napkin and tablecloth rental. Ensure that caterers are aware of this suggestion.
  - 3) If choosing paper, choose goods made with recycled paper content first. Avoid utilizing party items that are co-mingled with other materials, such as paper with coated metal, plastic or foam, which are not recyclable or compostable. Soft plastics are difficult to recycle, so it is advised to not use them.
  - 4) Avoid Styrofoam.

In the area of food service, we can minimize harms to the environment by (Assure that caterers are aware of these suggestions.):

- Washing dishes and utensils and, when possible, pots and pans in the dishwasher rather than by hand, to conserve water.
- Reducing the use of packaging that must be landfilled by buying in bulk, avoiding sugar and powder creamer in individual packets and by storing food in reusable glass containers.
- Note that for boxed pizza and other boxed foods, which cannot be recycled due to grease covering the cardboard, may be composted.
- Using re-usable spoons for coffee and tea rather than plastic stirrers.
- Reducing the use of single-use plates and cutlery and, when using single-use plates or cutlery, purchasing plates, bowls and cutlery made from recyclable and / or compostable content (and encouraging their recycling).
- Using cloth rather than paper towels in the kitchen.
- Recycle plastic film and bags that are clean and dry by placing them in the recycle container located in the coat room.

Food Waste Management:

- Recycle only the single-source items accepted by the City of Ann Arbor MRF (Material Recovery Facility, found in the Recycle Guidelines) used for the event.
- If possible, use Zero Waste volunteers to help instruct guests on the proper recycling, composting and trash disposal process into zero waste bins.
- Empty all appropriate recycled materials into the appropriate outside blue steel recycle dumpsters without any bagging.
- Compostable food items, such as veggie and fruit scraps, eggshells and uncooked food can be placed into the compost wheeled (brown) carts that are lined with brown lawn waste bags.
- All unrecyclable plastics, co-mingled manufactured materials (i.e., two different materials that are bonded together) and non-compostable cooked food waste must be placed in the trash, which will be transferred to the outside steel trash dumpster by the Genesis Staff.

**GIVE-AWAYS**

- Consider handing out environmentally sound (reusable) gifts, which teach a sustainable lesson: i.e., reusable water bottles filled with treats; environmental message t-shirts, etc.
- Honor your guests by donating to a meaningful cause.

**SERVICE PROJECTS**

- Sharing a green building provides a doorway into the exploration of many important environmental topics. Please contact the Genesis Green Team for ideas!

**TRANSPORTATION/TRAVEL**

- Encourage carpooling of guests to the event, service or for religious school.
- Encourage guests to consider public transportation and provide them with information needed to do so.
- Consider the purchase of carbon offsets for travel needed to bring in guests to the event.