These tools and activities can help congregations focus on what really matters in their personal lives and cut greenhouse gases at the same time. Many of these resources are designed for use at winter holidays, but are easily adapted for use throughout the year.

The stuff we buy and use is the largest single source of greenhouse gas emissions (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency). In other words, because of the impacts of production and extraction processes, Americans contribute more to climate change as a result of purchasing “stuff” than through other activities such as heating homes or driving our cars.\(^1\) Therefore, “stuff matters” from an environmental standpoint.

Conversely, stuff doesn’t matter much when it comes to happiness. Research shows that, once basic needs are met, such things as relationships with family and friends and leisure time to pursue our interests are what bring us happiness.

**RYH Tools to help congregants live more intentionally…**

- **Pick 5 Survey**—The survey takes just a couple of minutes to complete, and reminds us of the things that most bring us quality of life.—*Great for informal worship and adult education classes*

- **Pocket Guide**—These eight tips help congregants live more intentionally as they plan holidays and celebrations.—*Ideas for a weekly message and also great for informal worship and adult education classes*

- **Book and Resource List**--This list of books and resources might help you and others simplify life during the holidays.—*Great idea for coffee hour display featuring a sampling of resources*

- **Spoiling Grandkids: The Greatest Gift: You**—This 50-minute interactive presentation breaks participants into small groups to share ideas on gifts of talents, gifts of words and gifts of time that each of us can give the children in our lives.—*Great for adult education classes*

- **Green Gifts**—This handout gives green gift ideas, such as compact fluorescent light bulbs, LED lights, smart power strips, container gardening systems and bike gear.—*Great coffee hour handout or guide for adult education classes and worship services*

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\(^1\) Retrieved January 6, 2014 at [http://www.epa.gov/oswer/docs/ghg_land_and_materials_management.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/oswer/docs/ghg_land_and_materials_management.pdf), page 12. Chart shows Provision of Goods is 29% and Provision of Foods is 13% for a total of 42% as a result of purchasing “stuff.” In contrast, Building HVAC and Lighting is 25% and Local Passenger Transport combined with Other Passenger Transport is responsible for 24% of greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Gratitude Letter as a Gift**—Not the same as a “thank you note,” Gratitude Letters give writers an opportunity to examine the pleasure and meaning from relationships, and share that with a significant person.

**Great for children—and adults…**

- **Happiness Store**--This two-minute video from Public Broadcasting Service Kids reminds all ages that quality, not quantity, matters.

- **The Gift of Nothing**—This simply-illustrated, charming children’s picture book by Patrick McDonnell, great for all ages, tells the meaning of friendship and gift-giving.

- **Using Creativity, Cookies and Conversation to Build Relationships**—Thirty-minute activity, with option for extensions.—

**Intergenerational activity**

**Background information…**

Want to know why consuming less and consuming differently are so important? David Allaway, policy analyst, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, lays out some of the reasons -- as well as what Oregon is doing to address this important environmental issues -- in this PowerPoint presentation. *From "Managing Waste" to "Managing Materials"* is a large document, so please be patient as it downloads.

**Check out other resources at ReclaimYourHolidays.org.**