

## *Planning an Eco-Friendly Christmas*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

*As we prayerfully observe this holy season of Advent, most of us are also busy with myriad preparations for the traditional festivities that accompany Christmas. Please consider the following eco-friendly suggestions as you scurry to provide a wonderful Christmas for your loved ones.*

### *Deck the Halls*

1. If you are planning to buy a harvested tree, make sure the tree is FSC certified to confirm the tree has been sustainably sourced.
2. Avoid tinsel and plastic garland on your tree. It is not only eco-harmful but can prove dangerous to pets. Instead, take some time to garnish your tree with strings of popcorn and cranberries for a more traditional tree. Making strings of popcorn and cranberries to garnish your tree can be a fun family or community activity, and gives the tree a familial accent.
3. Invest in LED Christmas lights for indoor and outdoor lighting. LED light use an average of 75 per cent less energy and can last up to 25 times longer. (You'll save energy and money!)
4. Avoid buying new plastic ornamentation. Take some time to be creative: Clip pine branches and collect pine cones to make wreathes; mantel and door décor; center pieces. With a few cranberries and/or pieces of fruit, such décor is pleasing to the eye and smells wonderful.

### *Christmas Greetings*

5. Consider designing, composing, and sending e-cards. They not only cut your carbon footprint, but they save money. (Too, they indicate that you have thoughtfully considered those to whom you send Christmas greetings.) If you do send cards by mail, opt for those made of recycled paper.

### *Gift Giving*

6. When going gift shopping, take your own bags.
7. Try to avoid gifts made of plastic and/or require batteries.
8. Homemade gifts are *in fashion!* Cookies or brownies gifted on an environmental friendly plate or tray (not plastic, aluminum, paper) are great gifts.
9. Re-gift! What you have been given may not be right for you, but it may be a perfect gift for another. (It's better than letting it take up limited storage space. Too, it saves a few bucks!)
10. Be creative in gift wrapping: Use brown paper spruced up with pine twigs and cones; make your own gift cards. For fun gifts, use Sunday comic pages! Make your wrapping fun. Don't use foil or glittered paper as they are not recyclable.