

America Recycles Day: *Recycle* All Kinds of Light Bulbs November 15 and 17

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For the fifth year, SUMC is participating in America Recycles Day, a nationwide initiative every November 15 by Keep America Beautiful. Recycle all kinds of residential bulbs on November 15, in our church parking lot near the office entrance, 2-4 p.m., and for your convenience, the Sunday after, November 17, 9 a.m.-noon, same place:

- florescent tubes
- compact fluorescents (CFLs)
- metal halide
- incandescent
- halogen
- light emitting diodes (LEDs)

To protect human health, many municipalities require recycling mercury containing light bulbs. The EPA estimates that 600 million fluorescent lights are disposed of annually, with over 80% ending up in landfills where they release mercury into the environment. Because mercury persists in the environment, never dispose of fluorescent tubes, CFLs, or metal halide bulbs with your trash.

Transport bulbs that contain no mercury loose in a sturdy container, like a bucket or box: halogen, incandescent, and LED bulbs.

Take care not to break the bulbs that contain mercury because even small amounts of vaporized mercury are hazardous to human health and to our environment. For safety, Go Green Team volunteers will collect your bulbs from your car; please do not unload them yourself.

Carefully bag each CFL and metal halide in a sealed zip-lock bag, one per bag. We have plenty of good used zip-lock bags on hand that you can use to bag these bulbs at home; pick them up in the welcome area the first two Sundays in November.

Transport florescent tubes in the box the new ones came in (you can take your box back home) or carefully wrap them in newspaper or other protective material.

One CFL contains about 4 mg of vaporized mercury, one 4-foot florescent tube contains about 12 mg.

Mercury is now a world-wide contaminant. Processes in the environment convert it into methylmercury which bioaccumulates up the food chain. The amount of mercury contained in just 25 standard fluorescent bulbs can pollute a 20-acre lake, making the fish in the lake unsafe to eat. Years ago, this prompted the Missouri Department of Health and Human Services to issue a statewide advisory on eating top level predator fish species (such as largemouth bass) greater than 12 inches long from Missouri lakes and ponds.

When mercury is released from a broken bulb, it instantly evaporates into an invisible, odorless, toxic vapor that can cause serious health injury and may be lethal when people breathe and inhale it into their lungs. It is better to recycle the valuable (and toxic) mercury from bulbs than to set bulbs out with the trash where they almost always break and release the mercury before the broken glass shards are buried in our landfills.

Our Go Green Team delivers the CFLs to Lowe's for free recycling and all other bulbs to the Computer Recycling Center in Springfield. Fees pass directly to the companies that extract mercury, a complicated procedure for processing hazardous materials.

Fees: \$1/tube; \$2.50/metal halide; all other bulbs/free. We cannot accept broken bulbs. For safety, we cannot store bulbs in the church at any other time, so please do not drop them off except on these days.



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NOVEMBER 15