

EARTH DAY GREEN IDEAS

Here are some suggestions for thoughtful consideration as we observe Earth Day offered humbly by the Green and Social Concerns Team. Some ideas are easy to implement; others require more effort. Consider what will be meaningful for you and your family.

Preparation

Reflect on the great lament of creation and those who share it. Pray with people around the world: Creator, open my heart to the pain of your creation.

Creator, let me hear the cries of those who suffer for the way I live.

Creator, give me strength to live in harmony with your creation.

1st Week: Waste Week

- Use your own water bottle. Plastic bottles and dishes will not decompose for thousands of years. Commit to bringing your own dishware and cutlery to use outside the home.
- Make a list of the items you throw away this week. Identify wasteful items you can eliminate from your daily habits.
- Reduce food waste. Buy only the food you need. Eat or give away all the food you buy.
- Use reusable shopping bags at the supermarket and everywhere you shop.
- If you will be assisting with the gift of Easter baskets, plan now for baskets and contents that are environmentally friendly. (See the related article in the March newsletter.)
- Recycle everything that you can.

2nd Week: Food Week

- Buy organic. Organic fruit, vegetables and other foods are produced without the most harmful pesticides and fertilizers.
- Choose compassion. All of God's creation deserves respect. Choose meat, fish, eggs, and dairy that were farmed ethically and sustainably. Eat less meat.
- Compost food waste. Food waste constitutes a large portion of the material in landfills, where it rots and creates methane, a potent greenhouse gas. Composting strengthens the soil and sequesters greenhouse gas.

3rd Week: Energy Week

- Install LEDs. Increasing energy efficiency is the first step in stewarding the resources we've been given. Replace old bulbs with efficient, long-lasting LEDs.
- Conserve. Neither the blessing of abundant power nor the dirty fuels that often make it possible should be taken for granted. Set large appliances like refrigerators and water heaters on a low setting. Turn off and unplug anything that has a switch when you're not using it (they still draw power even if not turned on) – toaster, coffee maker, printer, etc.
- Commit to getting one piece of solar equipment in 2020. This could be a solar light, solar charger for your phone, or a solar panel for your home.

4th Week: Water Week

- Time how long it takes you to shower. Set a goal of reducing that time.
- When letting the shower run to warm up, collect that otherwise wasted water in buckets. Use to water plants or for other household uses.
- Most sinks and shower nozzles allow much more water to pass through than is needed for the task. Install low-flow fittings to limit your water use without sacrificing function.

5th Week: Week of Appreciating Nature

- Meditate on the gift of creation. Take a walk outdoors, contemplate the plants inside your home, or simply close your eyes and focus on the feeling of sun and wind on your skin. Plan an outing to rejoice in creation rather than consumption.
- Start a journal or photography project to reflect on how creation strengthens your spirit, how you see it changing, and how you will protect it.
- Pledge to pray, act, and advocate for creation. Consider making a donation to a group whose goal is to protect our precious environment and its creatures and resources.

6th Week: Week of Service

- Find a way to be of service to others this week. There are many opportunities here at Faith, as well as elsewhere in the community.
- Continue the traditional Lenten practice of increased giving to people experiencing poverty.
- Commit your time, energy and resources to supporting social justice causes through such organizations and programs as the Lutheran World Federation (lutheranworld.org) and the ELCA Good Gifts project (goodgifts.elca.org). You can also show your support to your legislators for a variety of causes at <https://blogs.elca.org/>.

- Adapted from Cory Drive, Living Lutheran, February 2020, and other sources