

## Celebrating God's Gifts

Christmas is a renewed opportunity to celebrate the gift of Jesus coming into our lives. It's also a time to show love for God's other gift—creation.

Did you know the holiday season in America generates 25% more trash, plus more food waste and more emissions than the rest of the year?

Oops!

In the name of Jesus, we can be **care-full** as we celebrate.

## Tips for December

This Christmas season take to heart John Wesley's Rule for Christian Living: "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can!" "Doing good" doesn't have to be expensive. **Be thoughtful about what you give** to others and to God's creation.

As you select gifts online, **turn your shopping green** by exploring companies that are environmentally focused, that give back a percentage of profits to support environmental actions, and that have ethical practices, as well as great products that won't quickly end up in a landfill.

**Instead of using wrapping paper you'll have to trash**, adorn your gift with a scarf (new or vintage) that can be worn or wrap in new pillowcases or with other fabric pieces that can be reused another year to make a pretty package. Look also for old maps, sheet music, the funnies from the newspaper or cut a circle from a Christmas card to decorate the lid of a canning jar that holds your gift.

**Stuff that stocking sustainably.** Add a shampoo bar, a silicone reusable stretch lid or a beeswax wrap for leftovers, a bracelet made of plastic recovered from an ocean, a bamboo toothbrush, a pen that's not made of plastic, metal straws, a set of cloth napkins and napkin rings, or a packet of seeds for native plants or wildflowers, for example. Little gifts like these come with big benefits for the Earth and an opportunity to introduce someone else to creation care. [EarthHero](#) is a great source for sustainable products from many different companies.

**Buy children's gifts with sustainability in mind.** Will the toy actually sustain the child's interest? Is playing with it 90% kid and 10% toy or 90% toy and only 10% kid? Is it made of sustainable materials? Will it be something that can eventually be passed along to another child? Browse "sustainable toys" for ideas.

Consider giving your children or grandchildren one of God's creations to love. Visit the [World Wildlife Fund gift center](#). WWF offers adoption options for more than 100 amazing creatures. Some adoptions include a cute plush animal. Alternatively, you can purchase the stuffed toy from another source. Either way, give the gift and **talk with your young person about loving all of God's creatures.**

This holiday, **connect with family and friends electronically.** Eliminate travel emissions, and opt for Zoom visits or Facetime. Save trees and manufacturing water-waste with digital cards. Explore [Jacquie Lawson's](#) collection.

**Select your tree carefully.** Live trees that you can replant are kindest to the environment. A tree harvested from an organic tree farm will likely be replaced at the farm with two others that will also combat climate change. Plastic trees need to be used at least 10 years to keep their impact below that of live-tree options. Be sure to use LED lights on whichever choice works for you.

**Dispose of your tree carefully.** Replanted is best. Composted or chipped trees that can be used for trail footing in parks are good too. Commercial companies or local government may offer this service. Find out the possibilities in your area. Do not burn a tree because that releases carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Reuse and reuse a plastic tree and then find someone else who will enjoy it. Check with local charities, shelters, and churches. Do your best to keep your tree out of a landfill.



Let there be light! LED (light emitting diode) bulbs are brighter, don't produce heat, and use 90% less energy than incandescent ones. **Decorate your home and your tree with LEDs.** Put them on a timer to save even more energy. You can also give a package or two of the bulbs to someone you love and help them love creation.

Photo by [Bob SpringBob54](#) from [Pexels](#)

**The United Methodist Creation Justice Movement is providing these Tips as a tool to equip church members, families, and individuals to respond to God's call to care for creation and do justice with our neighbors.**

**For more about the UM Creation Justice Movement, go to [umcreationjustice.org](http://umcreationjustice.org).**

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**Creation  
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tips

