

# Virginia *Because the world can change a lot in 40 days.*

## Lenten Creation Care 2020

Lent is a time for prayer, fasting, and more intentional sharing. This year, our church is joining with many others in heeding the call to be stewards of God's Creation throughout this season.

May this calendar remind us to be more mindful of the ways that our daily habits impact both our common home and all those with whom we share it.

On behalf of future generations and all living in poverty—those most harmed by our damaged climate—may we answer God's call to be faithful stewards, speaking out for Creation care.



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INTERFAITH  
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Our religious response to climate change.

| SUNDAY  | MONDAY  | TUESDAY   | WEDNESDAY  | THURSDAY  | FRIDAY  | SATURDAY   |
|---|---|---|--|---|---|--|
| <p>A prayer from Psalm 51:<br/><i>Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Creator God, we begin this Lenten season asking for Your renewal. Through prayer, fasting, and sharing over these 40 days, we ask that our eyes be opened to the ways we can do better; in our relationships with You, Your Creation, and all those with whom we share this, our common home. Lord, help us to restore what has been damaged through our sinful overconsumption and the systemic injustices that surround us, returning to You with renewed spirits.</i></p> |   | <p><b>FEBRUARY 26</b><br/><b>Ash Wednesday</b><br/>Today, the United Church of Christ and environmental justice groups are releasing a report on the worst air polluters and the people and communities who are sickened by dirty air.<br/>Learn more: <a href="http://bit.ly/ashwedpress">bit.ly/ashwedpress</a></p> | <p><b>26</b><br/>The General Assembly session is almost over. Read updates about the legislative priorities the faith and environment community supported: <a href="http://vaipl.org/ga2020/">vaipl.org/ga2020/</a></p>  | <p><b>27</b><br/>Christians have fasted from meat during Lent for centuries. Try eating vegetarian today and check out Oxfam's Eat for Good online for other ways to use your fast to bless others: <a href="http://bit.ly/eat4good">bit.ly/eat4good</a></p>  | <p><b>28</b><br/>"The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it."<br/>- Gen 2:15<br/>Plan a garden today and start some seeds to germinate indoors! An herb garden in your kitchen window can be an easy way to start.</p> | <p><b>29</b></p>   |
| <p><b>MARCH 1</b><br/>Talk with your church about ordering "eco palms" for Palm Sunday. These palms help improve workers' living standards and protect forests in Mexico and Guatemala. Order by 3/13 to receive them in time: <a href="http://EcoPalms.org">EcoPalms.org</a></p>   | <p><b>2</b><br/>Read about how Virginia congregations are getting their energy from heaven by going solar! <a href="http://VAIPL.org/take-action">VAIPL.org/take-action</a></p>   | <p><b>3</b><br/>Turn down your thermostat by at least 1 degree. In cold weather, aim for 68° during the day and 60° at night. Buy a programmable thermostat if you can. Always turn the heat off when you leave home.</p>   | <p><b>4</b><br/>"You will be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in."<br/>- Isaiah 58:12b<br/><br/>Take time today to repair something that you might otherwise have discarded and replaced.</p>  | <p><b>5</b><br/>Weatherize your home and prevent heat (and money) from being wasted! Find project ideas and how-tos: <a href="http://bit.ly/weatherizehome">bit.ly/weatherizehome</a> or contact <a href="mailto:VAIPL">VAIPL</a> for more resources: <a href="mailto:ContactUs@VAIPL.org">ContactUs@VAIPL.org</a></p>          | <p><b>6</b><br/>Make one of your journeys more environmentally-friendly today. Could you combine two trips? Carpool rather than driving solo? Bike, walk, or take public transit, instead of driving?</p>   | <p><b>7</b><br/>Place an insulating cover on your water heater. "Blankets" can be found at hardware stores. If you have an electric water heater, you can do this yourself. If you have an oil or gas-powered heater, you may need a professional.</p> |
| <p><b>8</b><br/>"For God so loved the Cosmos ..."<br/>- John 3:16<br/><br/>God's circle of love is infinite and all-inclusive. Reflect and open your heart today to those in Creation, human or non-human, who sometimes fall outside your circle of love.</p>  | <p><b>9</b><br/>Care for Creation and support clean energy by divesting from fossil fuels and reinvesting in ways that support people and the planet: <a href="http://GreenAmerica.org/divest-reinvest">GreenAmerica.org/divest-reinvest</a> and choose a bank that aligns with your values: <a href="http://GreenAmerica.org/better-banking">GreenAmerica.org/better-banking</a></p> | <p><b>10</b><br/>Wash laundry in cold water for this week and hang it up to dry to save energy and money. Read more here: <a href="http://bit.ly/DitchYourDryer">bit.ly/DitchYourDryer</a></p>  | <p><b>11</b><br/>How will your church celebrate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day? Invite a workshop or guest speaker: <a href="http://VAIPL.org/resources">VAIPL.org/resources</a> workshops and find worship resources: <a href="http://FaithClimateActionWeek.org">FaithClimateActionWeek.org</a></p> | <p><b>12</b><br/>Plan a community conversation with your congregation for next month (Earth Month), and discuss how together you can make a safe, healthy, and equitable environment for all. <a href="http://VAIPL">VAIPL</a> can help you plan, email us at: <a href="mailto:contactus@vaipl.org">contactus@vaipl.org</a></p> | <p><b>13</b><br/>Purchase locally-grown food this weekend. Walk to a farmers' market or join a community-supported agriculture group: <a href="http://LocalHarvest.org">LocalHarvest.org</a></p>  | <p><b>14</b><br/>Go outside and undertake a spiritual practice in nature today: <a href="http://CenterForSpiritualityInNature.org/practices">CenterForSpiritualityInNature.org/practices</a></p>   |

URLs that begin with bit.ly are case-sensitive; all other links are not.

| SUNDAY   | MONDAY   | TUESDAY  | WEDNESDAY  | THURSDAY   | FRIDAY   | SATURDAY  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|
| Honor the Lord's day (and the Lord's Creation) by walking, biking, or taking public transportation to church today! Planning a trip? Consider purchasing carbon offsets. <b>15</b>   | Is your local stream clean enough for baptisms? Locate your waterway and its condition: <a href="http://bit.ly/watershedfinder">bit.ly/watershedfinder</a><br><br>Pray: <i>God of sacred waters, may we be a blessing to your waters.</i> <b>16</b>                                    | Green grass lawns are not so "green." Learn how to cultivate grounds that are good for people, plants, and creatures at home: <a href="http://bit.ly/greenergrounds">bit.ly/greenergrounds</a> and at church: <a href="http://bit.ly/sacredchurchgrounds">bit.ly/sacredchurchgrounds</a> <b>17</b> | Use cleaner energy at home. Go solar with the help of Solar United Neighbors: <a href="http://SolarUnitedNeighbors.org/Virginia">SolarUnitedNeighbors.org/Virginia</a> <b>18</b>   | Want to host a film screening and discussion about Creation care at your church? Browse VA IPL's Film Library: <a href="http://vaipl.org/resources/film-library/">vaipl.org/resources/film-library/</a> <b>19</b>  | As you fast from meat today, consider plant-based dishes for Easter Sunday: <a href="http://StFrancisAlliance.com/recipes">StFrancisAlliance.com/recipes</a> <b>20</b>   | In the US, >30% of all food is wasted. Reduce your food waste by planning well and eating leftovers. Consider composting what's left at home or get table scraps picked up: <a href="http://CompostCrew.com">CompostCrew.com</a> , <a href="http://VeteranCompost.com">VeteranCompost.com</a> <b>21</b> |
| "You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord..." Read Ephesians 5:8-14 and "live as children of light" without electricity! As a Sabbath practice, turn off or unplug everything you can for a half hour. <b>22</b>  | Organize a congregation and community stream cleanup for Earth Month in April. Participate in Project Clean Stream: <a href="http://bit.ly/projectcleanstream">bit.ly/projectcleanstream</a> <b>23</b>   | What role does your church community play in repairing our climate? Get involved with our green work, and flock together with other "green sheep" through VA IPL: <a href="http://bit.ly/VAIPLsignup">bit.ly/VAIPLsignup</a> <b>24</b>   | "Whoever serves me must follow me..." - John 12:26a <b>25</b><br><br>Pray for all our neighbors who face environmental devastation and for the courage of Jesus to sustain your commitment to environmental justice. Read more: <a href="http://bit.ly/VirginiaEJ">bit.ly/VirginiaEJ</a> | Continue your stewardship into the Easter season. Organize "E-cycling" for your congregation to dispose of old phones, tablets, computers, and TVs responsibly: <a href="http://e-stewards.org/find-a-recycler">e-stewards.org/find-a-recycler</a> <b>26</b> | Tomorrow at 8:30 pm, millions of people will switch their lights off for an hour to commit to climate action. Plan how you want to spend your hour in contemplation or thoughtful discussion with family or friends tomorrow. <b>27</b>                  | At 8:30 pm, join hundreds of millions of people around the world who will be switching off all lights for one hour to commit to global climate action and more mindful energy use: <a href="http://EarthHour.org">EarthHour.org</a> <b>28</b>   |
| Read Matt 5:43-48 and reflect on our call to love our "enemies." Pray for all those, especially business or elected leaders, who stand in the way of climate action or perpetuate injustices. Call or write to express your concerns. <b>29</b>                                  | "On either side of the river is the tree of life ... and its leaves are for the healing of the nations." - Rev. 22:2 Plant trees for healing this spring. Find out what's native to your area here: <a href="http://nwf.org/NativePlantFinder">nwf.org/NativePlantFinder</a> <b>30</b> | Consider the gifts given to you. Pray about how you are called to use your time, talent, passion, and treasure to care for our common home. <b>31</b>  | <b>APRIL 1</b><br><br>Read "Letter to a Young Climate Activist on the First Day of the New Decade" and reflect on the beauty that still surrounds us and the hope we can find through collective action: <a href="http://bit.ly/RebeccaSolnitletter">bit.ly/RebeccaSolnitletter</a>      | In your home, replace incandescent and compact fluorescent lights with LEDs. Each bulb replaced will save hundreds of pounds of climate pollution over time: <a href="http://bit.ly/chooseLEDs">bit.ly/chooseLEDs</a> <b>2</b>                               | Fast from meat today and read aloud "Prayer After Eating" by Wendell Berry: "I have taken in the light that quickened eye and leaf. May my brain be bright with praise of what I eat ... May I be worthy of my meat." <b>3</b>                           | Learn about how our Jewish neighbors give thanks before and after meals, praising the One who "brings forth bread from the earth": <a href="http://bit.ly/foodblessings">bit.ly/foodblessings</a> <b>4</b>  |
| <b>Palm Sunday 5</b><br>Rest today. Take a break from the TV and internet. Turn off everything, and unplug it if you can. Play a game, go for a walk, or read a book! Read Blessed Earth's resources on Sabbath living: <a href="http://SabbathLiving.org">SabbathLiving.org</a> | On average, a family of four in the US uses 40 gallons of water per day just in the shower! Set a timer for 5 minutes and consider installing a low-flow shower head: <a href="http://EPA.gov/WaterSense/showerheads">EPA.gov/WaterSense/showerheads</a> <b>6</b>                      | How will you continue to seek God through Creation? "Although we have done everything we can to separate ourselves from other(s) ... from the land and its waters and from God, God has never left us." - Bahnsen & Wirzba, <i>Making Peace with the Land</i> <b>7</b>                             | Talk with your family about your Lenten Creation care journey. <b>8</b><br><br>What ideas do you have to continue your stewardship into the Easter season?   | <b>Maundy Thursday 9</b><br>Today we remember Jesus's last supper with his disciples and his prayers in the garden of Gethsemane. Following Jesus' example, take time today to pray outdoors, remembering all who suffer through drought and starvation.     | <b>Good Friday 10</b><br>"At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two ... the earth shook, and the rocks were split." - Matt 27:51 Contemplate destruction already caused by climate change through wildfires, floods, and stronger storms. | <b>Holy Saturday 11</b><br>"God looked at everything that God had made, and indeed, it was very good." - Gen. 1:31a Take a walk and notice signs of new life, resurrection, and spring in your neighborhood. Take pictures or notes in a journal of what you see.                                       |

## 12 Easter Sunday

"For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace by the blood of his cross." - Colossians 1:19-20

"The New Testament does not only tell us of the earthly Jesus and his tangible and loving relationship with the world. It also shows him risen and glorious, present throughout Creation by his universal Lordship" - Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*

Trusting in the words of Philipians 1:6, "that the One who began a good work in you will bring it to completion,"

take time to give thanks for the changes of heart and habit you have taken on since Lent began, and continue to live out your call to Creation stewardship with the hope of the resurrection always in your heart!



Take some time today to reflect on all of the activities that you have performed during Lent, and how they have brought you into greater harmony with the earth and with all life. Conclude your Lenten Creation care practice by making a personal pledge to serve God and serve others by pursuing a more sustainable way of life.