Learn:

We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Care for the earth is not just an Earth Day slogan, it is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God’s creation. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored. USCCB

“Today the great gift of God’s Creation is exposed to serious dangers and lifestyles which can degrade it. Environmental pollution is making particularly unsustainable the lives of the poor of the world. In dialogue with Christians of various confessions, we must pledge ourselves to take care of creation and to share its resources in solidarity.” (Pope Benedict XVI. August 27, 2006)

☐ Check out these sources: http://interfaithpowerandlight.org  
http://CatholicClimatecovenant.org  
www.earth-lab.com/carbonprofile (Calculate your Carbon Footprint)

☐ Read or re-read Laudato Si/Praised Be by Pope Francis.  
Find it on our website ascensionpdx.org under SOCIAL CONCERNS or: https://laudatosi.com/watch

Laudato Si is…

† Addressed to “every person living on the planet to enter into dialogue with all people about our common home.”

† A Call: For a change in lifestyle and consumption, to live life more fully, for international action, political action, courage, calling all persons to conversion and action.

† About hope, dialogue, facing reality, integral ecology, the poor, work, common good, our children & grandchildren.

☐ Take your children to the library to check out an environmentally themed book to read.

Pray:

☐ For all, that we might see Creation as a gift to be cherished, protected and shared with all, rather than a commodity to be consumed by a few.

☐ For the poor, that our hearts be opened to their plight, that their dignity be upheld, and that we advocate on their behalf so they, and we, can pursue authentic human development.

☐ For elected officials and those in positions of power; that they act prudently and prioritize Care for God’s Creation, the poor and the common good ahead of short-term interests.

☐ Have an “Embrace the Silence Sunday”. Turn off everything and unplug it if you can. No tv, radio, or ring tones. Stay home after church. Sabbath is good for the soul.

☐ Spend quiet, prayerful time in nature. Take children on nature walks. Pick up trash on the way.

† “All we have is what You have given us Lord. Life is a gift. Food is a gift. This earth is a gift. Help us live lives that express gratitude for all Your gifts: life, food, and the beauty of this earth.”

† “God, every breath we take is evidence of Your loving mercy. Every meal we eat is evidence of Your nurturing care. Help our gratitude and love for You be equally evident. Not just in the words we speak, but also in our care for the environment and with lifestyles that can be easily sustained by an earth we share with others.”

† Triune Lord, wondrous community of infinite love, teach us to contemplate you in the beauty of the universe, for all things speak of you. Awaken our praise and thankfulness for every being that you have made. Give us the grace to feel profoundly joined to everything that is. God of love, show us our place in this world as channels of your love for all the creatures of this earth for not one of them is forgotten in your sight. Enlighten those who possess power and money that they may avoid the sin of indifference, that they may love the common good, advance the weak, and care for this world in which we live. The poor and the earth are crying out.

O Lord, seize us with your power and light, help us to protect all life, to prepare for a better future, for the coming of your Kingdom of justice, peace, love and beauty. Praise be to you! Amen

Excerpted from “A Christian prayer in union with creation,” in Laudato Si, no. 246
Care for God’s Creation: Ideas to Reduce Our Carbon Footprint

Act: Begin on Ash Wednesday

✓ Unplug one light bulb in your home as a reminder that you are reducing your carbon footprint.
✓ Check off each action as you complete it!
✓ Keep moving down the list and growing in your progress.
✓ Join Ascension’s Creation Care Team to let us know you are participating in the Carbon Fast. Look for the link on https://ascensionpdx.org/social-concerns-ministry

Food and Drink Consumption:
- Look at the food you discard. Set a goal to reduce it by 1/3 by eating leftovers, shopping using a list & planning your meals.
- Skip a cup of specialty coffee or fast food meal. Donate the amount you saved to Catholic Relief Services Rice Bowl.
- Buy foods grown locally. Shop at a farmer’s market. (Before arriving at your plate, the average meal travels over 1,200 miles. Buying locally produced products saves energy and supports local businesses.
- Avoid purchasing snack size servings of chips, yogurt, etc. Buy bigger sizes and dish out the proper serving size. Avoid buying products that have lots of packaging. Choose loose or bulk products and buy refillable containers. Avoid plastic.
- Go Re-usable! Use a reusable water bottle instead of buying bottled water. Use a reusable lunch box. Use rechargeable batteries. Skip the straw or go reusable. Bottled water produces up to 1.5 tons of plastic waste each year, which takes about 47 million gallons of oil to produce. The vast majority of plastic bottles end up in landfills.
- Eat less meat; enjoy a vegetarian or vegan meal. Fast from Meat on Mondays as well as Fridays. Go to MeatlessMonday.com Livestock production creates more climate change gases than all the motor vehicles in the world. In addition, much of the world’s deforestation is a result of clearing and burning to create grazing land for livestock. Fruits, vegetable, and grains require 95% less raw materials to produce and, when combined properly, can provide a complete nutritious diet.
- Buy something organic. Eating organic reduces the amount of pesticides and fertilizers released into the environment as well as keeping your family, farmers and food handlers away from these chemicals.
- Compost! Landfill sites are a major source of methane emissions. Reuse and recycle your waste and compost your food waste to reduce the rubbish destined for landfill sites.
- Begin spring gardening by going organic. Plant a vegetable garden.
- Create a pesticide free zone in your lawn and garden.

Energy Consumption:
- Turn off lights, unplug appliances and computers when you leave the room, and unplug your cell phone charger as soon as it is charged. 8% of electricity consumed at home is from appliances we aren’t using.
- Replace incandescent light bulbs with energy-efficient LED bulbs.
- Turn off water when shaving, brushing your teeth and take shorter showers. (Set a timer!)
- Keep your home temperature moderate. (Heat is on low, or air conditioner is turned off.)
- Wash clothes with cold water. Wash full loads only. Hang your clothes to dry. Install indoor clothesline.
- Use cloth napkins, cloth towels, cloth diapers. Do not use paper plates, paper towels, paper napkins, styrofoam.
- Clean or replace filters on your furnace and air conditioner every 3 months.
- Ride a bike, walk, carpool or use public transportation whenever possible.
- Close curtains to keep the cold out and the heat in.
- Insulate and/or weatherize your home.
- Recycle your plastic bags at your grocery store. Bring re-usable bags when you shop.
- Get rid of junk mail: Call 888-optout or go to DMAchoice.org, www.catalogchoice.org
- Request electronic bills and statements.
- Obey the speed limit when driving. Every 10 mph in speed reduces fuel economy by 4mpg.
- Check the tire pressure in your car. Cars with low tire pressure get lower mileage.
- Elect to subscribe to PGE Green Energy Plan, Green Source Solution, Time of Use Program or Solar.
- Request a Home Energy Use Audit.
- Looking for a new car? Purchase an electric or hybrid car instead of a gas-fueled car.

❖ Be Creative! Discover many other ways to Care for God's Creation: Pick up litter, plant a tree, feed the birds, plant a pollinator garden, join a "buy-nothing group", gift items you no longer need, join a community group that focuses on caring for creation (Ascension Parish Creation Team, DePave, Friends of Trees, Nature Conservancy, Community Gardens, etc.)

❖ OTHER WAYS I CARE FOR GOD’S CREATION:

❖ Easter: Replace that unplugged bulb with a low-energy bulb. Take time to reflect on the actions you took and how they have brought you into greater harmony with our Earth and all life. Make a personal pledge to serve God and others by pursuing a more sustainable way of life.

Compiled from many sources by Ascension Social Concerns Team