

Carbon Fast for Lent 2016



Why Fast?

Throughout history, fasting has been integral to the spiritual practice of people of all faiths. Like pebbles in our shoe, the hunger pangs of fasting are a steady reminder of an intention to leave behind an old way of life and to prepare for spiritual rebirth. The feeling of hunger prompts a continued awareness of the need to become more conscientious in our actions and to whole-heartedly commit to the inward transformation we seek. Fasting also reminds us to keep in our hearts the plight of the poor and the imperative to care for the least of these.

Many of us grew up “giving something up” for Lent—candy, meat, or other pleasures—only to gleefully indulge in the forbidden item when the season passed and then carry on with business as usual. While going without something we enjoy gives us a taste of sacrifice—and perhaps a gentle reminder of the those who routinely do without—it does not often bring about a deeper inward change.

We hope that this guide to a Lenten “Carbon Fast” will help you not merely “give up” some conveniences temporarily, but will assist you in making a more fundamental transformation as you prepare to awaken to new life in Christ.

Why Carbon?

Because carbon is a heat-trapping gas that contributes to global warming, reducing carbon emissions is critical to slowing the progression of climate change.

Reducing carbon emissions is urgent. Climate change is happening right here, right now. From droughts and erratic weather patterns that interfere with agriculture, to heat waves and natural disasters that claim lives and wreak havoc on communities, we must take swift and effective action.

Those who are being affected most severely by climate change— including millions of people in the developing world who have lost their homes and

livelihoods— are those whose own carbon footprints are the smallest, and who have fewest resources to cope with the fallout. This means that reducing our carbon emissions is also a matter of social justice.

Because every individual contributes to carbon emissions, every individual can also make changes to emit less. By making changes in the ways we drive our cars, heat and cool our buildings, and consume food and other goods that have travelled thousands of miles to get to us, we do our part in reducing the amount of carbon we add to the atmosphere.

How to use this calendar

Our hope is that you will commit this Lenten season to heeding the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor by taking steps to cut your carbon emissions. We hope that these steps will help you build sustainable habits and move toward what the Pope has called an “ecological conversion”—a transformation of the heart that shifts how understand your relationship with nature and other people.

To these ends, we have suggested one sustainability-related activity for each day between Ash Wednesday and Easter. Some of these might be things you’re already doing. Some require a little preparation. Some might be rather challenging.

Christians are called to dwell in community, to share in one another’s burdens and joys, and to work together as members of one body. You might see if members of your congregation or family want to participate in the Carbon Fast with you.

If doing one activity each day seems overwhelming, you might instead choose one activity each week and repeat it each day. Or choose one action and do it for the whole season.

In this season of repentance and rebirth, we hope above all that this calendar will be a tool for spurring action and reflection, helping us right our relationship with the Earth, in these 40 days and beyond.



Brought to you by Michigan IPL, with thanks to Washington IPL for many of the ideas contained in this calendar.

Carbon Fast for Lent



FEBRUARY 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10 Ash Wednesday Calculate your carbon footprint: http://www.nature.org/greenliving/	11 Based on your carbon footprint score, set goals for shrinking your emissions.	12 Learn about our oceans and commit to buying only seafood that was fished sustainably.	13 Install a programmable thermostat. Set it lower during the day and at bedtime.
14 1st Sunday Find the most environmentally friendly way you can to get to church today.	15 Put out bird food. Enjoy the beauty of these and other creatures on God's Earth.	16 Consider ordering sustainably grown palms for your Palm Sunday service.	17 Read Matthew 25:34-45. Consider how environmental degradation affects the poor.	18 Set your printer to print on both sides and buy paper that has a recycled content.	19 Run your dishwasher only with a full load. Skip the heat cycle and let your dishes air dry.	20 Caulk and weather-strip around doors and windows to plug air leaks.
21 2nd Sunday Consider starting or rejuvenating an Earth Care Team in your congregation.	22 Learn about how your diet impacts climate change: vegmichigan.org .	23 If you like to buy coffee on the go, remember to bring your travel mug with you!	24 Turn down your water heater; 120 degrees is usually hot enough.	25 When heating water on the stove, use a lid. Only use as much water as you need.	26 Set a timer for 5 mins. and see how your shower compares. Can you improve your time?	27 Make sure your tire pressure is set correctly for optimal gas mileage.
28 3rd Sunday Take a walk. Greet your neighbors, feel the sun on your face. Rejoice in all creation!	29 Call your utility to schedule a free home energy assessment and get free upgrades.	1 Instead of using the dryer, hang your clothes to dry on a rack.	2 Save trees and reduce waste by stopping unwanted junk mail at dmachoice.org	3 Just Say No to plastic bags. Keep cloth bags on hand for planned or impromptu shopping.	4 Turn the water off while brushing your teeth to save 50+ gallons of water per week.	5 Think prayerfully about our use of natural resources. What would Jesus drive, eat, etc.?



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MARCH 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 3rd Sunday Take a walk . Greet your neighbors, feel the sun on your face. Rejoice in all creation!	29 Call your utility to schedule a free home energy assessment and get free upgrades.	1 Instead of using the dryer, hang your clothes to dry on a rack.	2 Save trees and reduce waste by stopping unwanted junk mail at dmachoice.org	3 “Just Say No” to plastic bags. Keep cloth bags on hand for planned or impromptu shopping.	4 Turn the water off while brushing your teeth to save 50+ gallons of water per week.	5 Think prayerfully about our use of natural resources. What would Jesus drive, eat, etc.?
6 4th Sunday If your family has more than one car, use your most fuel efficient one for errands and trips.	7 Systemic change not climate change! Become an advocate at: MichiganIPL.org/action	8 As you plan your garden, choose native perennials that require less water.	9 Tame your lead foot while on the highway. Higher speeds reduce fuel economy.	10 Do the 4 R's: Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, and Recycle.	11 Check that all lights and electrical equipment are switched off when not in use.	12 Throw out any incandescent lights in your home and install LEDs.
13 5th Sunday Observe the Sabbath by unplugging your electronics and yourself!	14 Protect our waterways by learning about proper prescription drug disposal.	15 Watch this: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_lqFTYlc_4	16 Explore how you can make an upcoming vacation “greener.”	17 Feast of St. Patrick Celebrate St. Patrick's Day by sourcing your corned beef and cabbage locally!	18 Watch movie about faith and environment Ideas: www.miipl.org/films-videos/	19 Feast of St. Joseph Learn about your power. How much of the energy you use comes from coal? Nuclear? Gas?
20 Palm Sunday Wash your clothes in cold water. Modern soaps do not need hot water to be effective.	21 Power down your computer at the end of the day. Screen savers do not save energy!	22 Every device that plugs in draws power even after it's charged. Smart strips can help!	23 Change your furnace filter every 3 months to ensure that your furnace runs efficiently.	24 Maundy Thursday Turn off your ignition when waiting more than 10 seconds to protect air quality.	25 Good Friday Try buying nothing today. Repurpose, borrow, or simply go without.	26 Holy Saturday Make your own cleaning products with non-toxic ingredients like vinegar and essential oils.
27 Easter As you reflect on the Resurrection, continue to celebrate and steward God's creation!	28 Bonus: Recalculate your carbon footprint. Did it shrink? Let us know!	29	30	31	1	2



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