

LENT 2020 – Deepening our Journey with Jesus: Keeping Faith on a Fragile Planet

Introduction. Lent is a season of spiritual discipline. This Lenten calendar invites you to “sample” a variety of disciplines that can help us “keep faith on a fragile planet.” Each Sunday sets gratitude as the wellspring of our actions. The remaining days (the actual 40 days of Lent) offer actions to take. Some are one-time actions while others *could become habits*. Follow the calendar as closely—or as loosely—as you wish. View these daily suggestions as *persistent invitations*, not demands. At the end of Lent, consider adopting 3 or 4 of the actions you took *and making them into habits*, weaving them into the rhythm of your life.

February 26 – Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday reminds us of our mortality. Both your life *and the entire planet* are framed by finitude as one facet of creation’s *goodness*. Say a prayer asking God’s companionship as you journey toward a more faithful relationship with finitude this season.

Thursday, February 27

Pick one meal/day or one day/week to say a table prayer. (If this is a new commitment, find a way to remind yourself.) Include thanks for the earth, weather, pollinators, farm labor, etc., in your prayers.

Friday, February 28

Make your Lenten fish fry “fish fair.” Seafood Watch’s consumer guide can help you choose fish that are plentiful and sustainably fished. Pick up a wallet-sized guide to have with you when shopping. www.seafoodwatch.org

Saturday, February 29

Give up water in single-use plastic bottles—and not just for Lent, but for good. (And for the planet’s sake!) Buy a reusable water bottle or two and establish a routine to use them instead. Watch “The Story of Bottled Water” (8 min.) at www.storyofstuff.org.

Sunday, March 1

Practice gratitude. Set aside 10-15 minutes to simply reflect on aspects of Wind and Air you are grateful for or that fill you with awe. From birds and bees to billowing clouds and frosty breath and much more ...

Monday, March 2

Try Meatless Mondays for Lent. Meat production puts more CO₂ into the air (which warms our climate) than any other food. If you aren’t ready to go vegetarian, cutting back even once a week helps. Find recipes at www.meatlessmonday.com

Tuesday, March 3

Two-trip Tuesdays. Plan your errands for the week. Fewer trips means fewer emissions. Try to eliminate single-stop trips during Lent. If, each time you get in your car, you do two (or more) errands, you’ll save gas, time, and emit less CO₂.

Wednesday, March 4

Take a mid-week walk. Stroll or roll outdoors for 15-30 minutes today. Notice the wind and the air. They’re happy to have your company. Remember how grateful you are for theirs.

Thursday, March 5

Try out a shampoo bar for Lent. (You can find them at any food co-op.) You’ll get all the suds, shine, and clean—and none of the plastic bottle.

Friday, March 6

Watch the short (20 min.) animated film “The Story of Stuff” online. It’s an accessible and unsettling picture of how much we’re living at odds with our own planet. Find it & other eco-shorts at www.storyofstuff.org.

Saturday, March 7

Can you share a ride with someone to church on Sunday? Today’s the day to set that up. You’ll not only save gas, you’ll also have a chance to make or deepen a friendship.

Sunday, March 8

Practice gratitude. Set aside 10-15 minutes to simply reflect on aspects of Fire and Energy you are grateful for or that fill you with awe. From warm homes and cooked food to rumbling volcanoes and whirring machines and much more ...

Monday, March 9

Time for another Meatless Monday. If you already eat meatless, make it an Animal-Free Monday and eat vegan (no meat, eggs, or dairy).

Tuesday, March 10

Sign up for a weekly CSA (“community supported agriculture”) box for the summer. Sign-ups are happening right NOW. Most CSAs offer half-shares for smaller families. *It’s food—straight from Mother Earth.*

Wednesday, March 11

Check the temperature setting on your hot water heater. If it’s higher than 120° (indicated by the Δ mark on most dials), turn it back to 120°. Every 10 degrees you turn it down from 150-140-130 (marked as C, B, A on most dials) will save 3-5% in energy costs.

Thursday, March 12

Make it “Just the Cup” Thursday *everyday*. Do you *really* need that plastic lid and straw? Sometimes *you do*. But not always. And those plastic lids & straws *rarely* get recycled. So as often as you can, go with “just the cup.”

Friday, March 13

Give your fridge and freezer a quick Friday tune-up. Dusty coils can reduce their efficiency by as much as 25%. Vacuum the coils; you’ll save money, they’ll last longer, and the planet breathes easier. Need help? Ask a friend and build community at the same time!

Saturday, March 14

Step back from the beef. If you eat meat, *any meat* that’s not beef (pork, lamb, turkey, chicken) is easier on our climate. Trade out one beef meal over the next week for a different meat choice. The planet will thank you.

Sunday, March 15

Practice gratitude. Set aside 10-15 minutes to simply reflect on aspects of Earth you are grateful for or that fill you with awe. From mountains and deserts to forests and jungles and much more ...

Monday, March 16

Keep up that Meatless (or Animal-Free) Monday —that’s how habits form. Jot down a few menu ideas so you have them ready for more Mondays.

Tuesday, March 17

Two-trip Tuesdays. Plan your errands for the week. Fewer trips means fewer emissions. Try to eliminate single-stop trips during Lent. If each time you get in your car, you do two (or more) errands, you’ll save gas, time, and emit less CO2.

Wednesday, March 18

Take a mid-week walk. Stroll or roll outdoors for 15-30 minutes today. Feel the earth beneath your feet. She’s happy to have your company. Remember how grateful you are for hers.

Thursday, March 19

Carry the EWG (Environmental Working Group) “Clean Fifteen” & “Dirty Dozen” cards to guide your produce shopping and avoid the fruits and vegetables with the highest pesticide residues. Get a card at www.ewg.org/foodnews.

Friday, March 20

Kiss those plastic shopping bags good-bye. Make the switch to sturdy re-usable bags for shopping. Build the habit to keep a couple in your car all the time. The little things DO add up.

Saturday, March 21

Can you share a ride with someone to church on Sunday—or to somewhere else in the next week? Today’s the day to set that up. You’ll save gas—and have a chance to make or deepen a friendship.

Sunday, March 22

Practice gratitude. Set aside 10-15 minutes to simply reflect on aspects of Water you are grateful for or that fill you with awe. From lakes and waterfalls to mists and fog and much more ... *Today is World Water Day!*

Monday, March 23

Another Meatless (or Animal-Free Monday—almost a habit by now ...

Tuesday, March 24

In light of World Water Day (3/22), remember your own “water day”—your baptism. Recall how water, through its *felt wetness*, wrapped you in grace. From oceans to ice caps to nearby rivers and lakes water is under assault today. Hold all water in a moment of prayer.

Feast of Annunciation – March 25

Today marks Gabriel’s visit to Mary to announce her pregnancy with Jesus (Luke 1:26). Write a *short* note to a child in your life (family/church). Share what you’re doing to help the planet. *Be hopeful not fearful*. Mail it or keep it to yourself.

Thursday, March 26

Try a milk alternative. Dairy has a *huge* carbon footprint. ☺ Oat & hemp are the “greenest” nondairy milks, then soy & rice. Avoid almond & coconut milks; both have ecological drawbacks.

Friday, March 27

Next time you wash clothes, hang most or all of them up inside and let the air dry them. Just toss them in the dryer for a few minutes at the end to get the wrinkles out. You’ll save energy, add some humidity to your indoor air, and reduce CO2 emissions.

Saturday, March 28

Participate in Earth Hour by turning off all non-essential lights from 8:30-9:30 p.m.—including all TV, phone, and computer screens. Consider listening to the radio, singing songs, or telling stories by candlelight. Learn more at www.earthhour.org

Sunday, March 29

Practice gratitude. Set aside 10-15 minutes to simply reflect on aspects of Animals you are grateful for or that fill you with awe. From pets and wild beasts to backyard critters and bugs and much more ...

Monday, March 30

Meatless (or Animal-Free) Monday! But then, you knew that, didn’t you? ☺

Tuesday, March 31

Two-trip Tuesdays. Plan your errands for the week. Fewer trips means fewer emissions. Try to eliminate single-stop trips during Lent. If each time you get in your car, you do two (or more) errands, you’ll save gas, time, and emit less CO2.

Wednesday, April 1

Take a mid-week walk. Stroll or roll outdoors for 15-30 minutes today. Notice the critters (pets, squirrels, bugs!) you see ... and consider the ones you don’t—especially endangered species. *They’re all in this with you*. Remember you’re in this with them.

Thursday, April 2

Take in your own take out containers. Keep a couple re-useable containers right in your car—and use them to bring home any restaurant leftovers.

Friday, April 3

Ditch the plastic bag lining your kitchen garbage can. Use a paper grocery bag instead. Or look for “extra strong” compostable bag liners. (You can find them at a local Co-op; stronger than regular compost bags, they’ll hold together until they hit the landfill.

Saturday, April 4

Another ride-share Saturday. Plan ahead for Sunday or another occasion.

Palm Sunday – April 5

Practice gratitude. Set aside 10-15 minutes to simply reflect on aspects of People you are grateful for or that fill you with awe. From saints and siblings to ancestors and those yet to be born and much more ...

Monday, April 6

Meatless (or Animal-Free) Monday! Congratulate yourself on completing this practice. Better yet, raise a simple toast to a *new habit* for a healthier planet—and a healthier you!

Tuesday, April 7

Jesus has reached Jerusalem, but countless refugees and immigrants, uprooted by climate disruption and its related political turmoil, are still afoot today—including on our southern border. Pray that God's love—and our compassion—enfold them all.

Wednesday, April 8

Midweek Local Market Day. Jesus' disciples got all their food for the Last Supper locally. Try that yourself this week or next. Shop at a local market or buy as much locally-produced food as you can (many stores identify their local products).

Maundy Thursday – April 9

Today we remember the first Communion and Jesus' call to love one another. Consider how this meal and this commandment link us to *all persons across the globe*. Pray that your own love rises to this high and holy task.

Good Friday – April 10

As we recall Jesus' death on the cross, we dare to allow our grief to run deeper than we thought possible. *We need that depth of grief to encompass Earth these days*. God holds all suffering in God's heart. We must seek to do the same.

Holy Saturday – April 11

Jesus is in the grave today. We'll *all* be in the grave someday. But most modern burial practices keep us *disconnected* from Earth. Consider whether you're willing to reclaim our kinship with the ground and explore a green burial option. One place to start is: www.greenburialcouncil.org.

Easter Sunday – April 12

Bear witness! What have you learned, felt, or experienced as a result of your Lenten practice? Can you identify a couple actions that you'd like to turn into *habits*? By now you have a good start on a couple of them. But share your experience and your commitment with someone else. (Bear witness!) That sharing not only helps deepen your resolve, it also plants seeds in others.

Christ is Risen. We are risen indeed!

A Word of Thanks ...

Thank you for using this calendar in whatever way worked for you. I hope it supports a meaningful Lenten season ... and that it might actually sow seeds of renewal in your life well beyond Lent. I believe the Gospel—the message of God's love that Jesus brought ... and lived ... and died for—includes *all of creation*. With so much of creation in peril these days, it seems appropriate to keep company with Jesus during Lent by taking modest but intentional steps to be in solidarity with the world that God so loves. —David

Credits

David Weiss created this Lenten Calendar drawing on a variety of sources, but the final product, both in content and design is his own. The practice of “coming from gratitude” is central to *Active Hope* (Joanna Macy & Chris Johnstone, New World Library, 2012). These other sources were especially helpful in generating specific ideas:

- 2020 Lent Calendar, Creation Justice Ministries; www.creationjustice.org.
- 2019 Tread Lightly for Lent, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/tread-lightly-for-lent-lent-calendar.
- And www.livinglent.org.

Additionally, special thanks to Tracy Kugler for her gentle insistence on a Lenten resource that didn't just offer a plethora of good ideas, but one that actually supported building new habits to last beyond Lent.

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