

First Congregational Church of Montclair, NJ -- Lenten Calendar 2025
Forty Days of Creation Care: A Spiritual Practice for Lent

In celebration and gratitude for the gifts of God's creation, we humbly ask God's grace as we take meaningful actions to protect all life on earth and confront the climate crisis and climate inequality. (FCC Creation Justice Covenant <https://www.fccmontclair.org/creation-justice-church/>)

The season of Lent provides an opportunity for us to reflect on our relationship with God, each other, and with all living things. Here are some suggestions from FCC's Green Team for actions we can take to protect our planet and our communities. Consider trying out one or more of them, sharing with family and friends, and joining us at a Green Team meeting (2nd Sunday of the month, after worship).



Spiritual Sun.	Meatless Mon.	Take Action Tues.	Waste Free Wed.	Thankful Thur.	Feel Good Fri.	Silent Sat.
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Week Theme: Let us begin Lent by reflecting on ways of traveling that support God's creation.

<p align="center"><i>From quark to planet</i></p> <p align="center"><i>Creator God, from quark to planet your universe is awesome. Give us eyes to gape at the wonders daily about us, and the will to live in the harmony of your creating. Help us to recognise and honour the connections of all things, even at cost to our own wants and comforts; so we may live gently on earth, and all creation praise you. Amen</i></p> <p align="center"><i>Chris Polhill, Eggs and Ashes</i></p>	<p>March 5 Ash Wednesday Prayer: God of Heaven and Earth, Inspire us this week as we reflect on transportation and how we care for this beautiful planet. Amen. People travel from one place to another. Let us choose environmentally sustainable ways of traveling as often as possible. https://tinyurl.com/3k2mpwtn</p>	<p>6 Give thanks to God for the many wonderful ways we can travel! <i>“for bike and boat and plane, for car and coach and train, for maker, inventor, travel agent, Thank you for the precious gift of travel, Teach us to use it wisely, God, Teach us to use it wisely”</i> —Chris Polhill</p>	<p>7 Get inspired by Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson to discover your “superpower” for addressing climate change including transportation emissions. We all have something to offer! Go here for Ted Talk & Venn diagram: https://www.ayanaelizabeth.com</p>	<p>8 Try a walking meditation today: https://tinyurl.com/bavzpkhn Spend a few minutes on a Venn diagram from yesterday's Lenten practice to reveal your own superpower. https://tinyurl.com/yc5t62b8 Could your superpower include transforming transportation? Listen to what God is revealing.</p>
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Week Theme: Water is older than the sun in scientific inquiry and scripture. God expects that we care for this essential resource.						
March 9 Prayer: Source of Creation, we pray we may find courage and strength in the wilderness when we are challenged to make difficult decisions as we care for the oceans, rivers, lakes, ponds, streams, and brooks. Amen.	10 On meatless Monday, let's honor rice, a crop grown in water that is under threat due to climate change. Rice is a daily staple for more than half of the planet's people. Consider trying this easy rice and bean dish! https://tinyurl.com/23ae3k65	11 Tell someone about how important clean water is for you, for the community, for the planet: that we cannot take it for granted, that it really matters to you that your children and grandchildren will have water to drink, to irrigate their fields, to play and know joy on the beach.	12 Use gray water to water outdoor plants. Turning the tap off while brushing your teeth or shaving can save more than 1.5 gallons of water a minute! Fill the dishwasher before use. Repair all leaks. A leaky toilet can waste 200 gallons per day. Use as little as possible.	13 So Thankful for sawgrass and mango groves, and tidal pools where minnows grow, and estuaries carved deep from glacial flow into ocean depths that blue whales know vast expanses in which plankton glow. All for shoreline children playing.	14 PLAY: Splash in a bathtub. Swim at the Y. Snorkel a reef. Jump in a puddle. Make a snowman. Skate, sleigh, ski. Take a warm shower. Soak your feet. Visit an aquarium. Blow bubbles.	15 For Serenity. The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. Making me to rest in green pastures. Leading me beside still waters. Restoring my soul. And leading me in the path of justice. <i>-Inspired by Psalm 23</i>
Week Theme: By exploring the impacts of fossil fuel use, we can become better prepared to live out our Creation Justice Covenant.						
March 16 Prayer: God of the Universe, Guide us this week as we reflect on the usage of energy. Inspire us to embrace habits and actions that help protect your wonderful Creation. Amen.	17 Experiment with a new meatless recipe, https://tinyurl.com/ycmhtn8p Did you know that most meat requires more energy to produce than other kinds of foods? Read more. https://tinyurl.com/yjz6vnpb	18 Watch Katherine Hayhoe's Ted Talk on talking about climate change. https://tinyurl.com/mr4d24uz And on this Global Recycling Day , remember other "R"s too: reduce, reuse, repair...& resist single-use plastics whenever possible. https://tinyurl.com/4x9jfytb	19 Check your doors and windows for drafts, then weatherstrip and caulk as needed. Save energy! Read and reflect on the United Nations' Climate Action page on Renewable Energy. Get Inspired! https://tinyurl.com/yeywd38s	20 Give thanks for clean clothes! Try using cold water only for your laundry. It's better for your clothes, and the earth! https://tinyurl.com/3sxez5rc Also, give thanks that UCC has a Council for Climate Justice. Check it out. https://tinyurl.com/h3httyz	21 Celebrate creation care habits you have embraced! Share the calendar's creation care action tips with a friend. Learn about LGBTQIA+ environmental organizations https://tinyurl.com/kr686c6v	22 Observe this World Water Day . by learning about carbon emissions and shrinking glaciers. https://tinyurl.com/y66ptjkb Find some time to meditate on ways you can help reduce carbon emissions and support others to do so as well.

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Week Theme: Let us be mindful of our waste and resolve to reduce it. Remember that our household trash is incinerated in Newark.

<p>March 23 Prayer: Inspire us to love and protect your precious gift of life on earth by doing our part to reduce man-made waste and pollution, and bear witness to the restoration & preservation of our natural and life-sustaining ecosystem. Amen.</p>	<p>24 Take out meals create so much waste: Plastic utensils, containers, etc. & gas for pick up and delivery. Find quick & easy meatless recipes online or from the library and make it a waste-free Monday too! https://tinyurl.com/yayfbbra</p>	<p>25 Today, let us be inspired to act by UCC member and civil rights activist, Dollie Burwell. She helped to birth the Environmental Justice movement by organizing opposition to toxic waste being dumped into her North Carolina community. Learn more of her story: https://tinyurl.com/mrx6sac3</p>	<p>26 Reduce waste today...and every day! Plastic sandwich / freezer bags can be safely reused. Here's how: https://tinyurl.com/35h3m6ab Here are 31 more actions that can make a real difference: https://tinyurl.com/4k38v4ym</p>	<p>27 Take a moment to thank God for giving you the wisdom and power to answer the call to protect our planet. Thank your family and friends who have joined you in this effort...and don't forget to thank yourself for caring and sharing your passion for climate justice.</p>	<p>28 Reducing waste can be fun. Some ideas: Bake some cookies, pick up an old knitting project, paint or draw, dance around the house to your favorite music, or spend time in the yard or local park catching up with an old friend.</p>	<p>29 This is the day that God has made...let us rejoice and be glad in it! Turn off mobile devices. Take a break from social media feeds. Embrace the nature around you, even if it's a single tree, or a few chirping birds. Allow yourself to feel the joy & wonder.</p>
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Week Theme: As we shop, honor the plants and animals that create our food, clothing and materials we depend on. Reduce your impact on the planet by paying attention to what is purchased and why.

<p>March 30 Prayer: Lord, help us to become more discerning in our purchasing, reflecting your justice and care for earth and all living beings. Amen.</p>	<p>31 For this Meatless Monday, remember to make lists before, and read labels during, food shopping to make smart, healthy, & environmentally good decisions.</p>	<p>April 1 Rip in your favorite pants or sweater? Create a new look by repairing it! It's surprisingly easy. https://tinyurl.com/3v92jnks Break the "fast fashion" habit: buy used clothing & upcycle your own. https://tinyurl.com/3kp7fea4</p>	<p>2 Did you know polyester is made from oil? Polyester clothes will not decompose but may contribute to the microplastics in air and soil. Today, learn about more sustainable fabric options: https://tinyurl.com/mvxdbf4y</p>	<p>3 Offer thanks to God for the incredible choices we have in our lives. And ask for reminders that buying products produced locally reduces the use of fossil fuels, and supports our communities. https://tinyurl.com/y5jp9av</p>	<p>4 Recognize and celebrate the changes you're making as you live more gently and sustainably on our planet. Journal your changes creating a personal history.</p>	<p>5 We have significant information available to us. Spend some time doing research on the Ethical Consumer https://www.ethicalconsumer.org</p>
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Spiritual Sun.	Meatless Mon.	Take Action Tues.	Waste Free Wed.	Thankful Thurs.	Feel Good Fri.	Silent Sat.
Week Theme: May we actively care for our miraculous diverse planet so generations to come will enjoy its many gifts.						
<p>April 6 O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. There is the sea, great and wide; creeping things innumerable are there, living things both small and great. <i>Psalms 104:24-25</i></p>	<p>7 Choose a forest friendly diet that is low in beef and palm oil. "It may not be well known, but agriculture is the main driver of deforestation & biodiversity loss." https://tinyurl.com/5t3xudyp</p>	<p>8 "Rainforests are one of our best lines of defense against climate chaos: they help regulate global temperatures and weather patterns, and they absorb massive amounts of carbon..." Learn more https://tinyurl.com/3kjpukxt</p>	<p>9 Reminder to avoid plastic packaging whenever possible. Sadly, much of it ends up in landfills which then can contaminate the food chain and most all forms of life. Read more. https://tinyurl.com/2vvt9cnr</p>	<p>10 I thank You God for most this amazing day: for leaping greenly spirits of trees and a blue true dream of sky; and for everything which is natural which is infinite which is yes. - <i>E.E. Cummings</i></p>	<p>11 Enjoy Nature! "It is not enough to fight for the land, it is even more important to enjoy it. Ramble out yonder, explore the forests, ... run those rivers." <i>Desert Solitaire: A Season in the Wilderness</i>, by Edward Abbey</p>	<p>12 Spend some quiet time today reading about and reflecting on climate change's impact on biodiversity in our home state of New Jersey. https://tinyurl.com/4tu6v2wh</p>
Week Theme: Moving our money away from banks doing harm and into banks that do good, aligns our money with our values.						
<p>April 13 Palm Sunday Prayer: Holy Spirit, grant me the courage to align my money with my values. Grant me the willingness to investigate new possibilities. Amen.</p>	<p>14 As you enjoy a plant-based meal today, remember that the beef industry contributes to climate change. Big banks are driving the increase in global meat & dairy production. https://tinyurl.com/4kmat2d2</p>	<p>15 Do you know what your bank is doing with your money? Does it invest in fossil fuels or in local communities? Find out here: https://mightydeposits.com/ Consider sharing your findings with a family member or friend.</p>	<p>16 Don't waste your financial power today. Find a bank or credit union that not only does not harm, but actually does good and aligns with your Creation Justice values. Research green banks here: https://tinyurl.com/muvrntnv</p>	<p>17 Maundy Thursday Almighty God, We are grateful for your Creation. When we stumble in our efforts to fulfill our Creation Justice Covenant, we ask that you lift us up. Grant us renewed will to keep going on this path to which we are called. Amen.</p>	<p>18 Good Friday During this Holy Week, we give thanks for Jesus' powerful example of disrupting business as usual. Inspire us to be faithful stewards of our own gifts and talents and of God's good creation.</p>	<p>19 Holy One, We contemplate the great sacrifice that You made for us. We ask that You grant us the willingness to experience some inconvenience as we move our lifestyles away from the fossil fuel industry, and to a cleaner future. Amen.</p>

Resources: In addition to the links embedded in the document, we would also like to acknowledge the following resources that provided us with much inspiration: [Eggs and Ashes](#) by Ruth Burgess and Chris Polhill, [What If We Get It Right? Visions of Climate Futures](#) by Ayanna Elizabeth Johnson, The Virginia Interfaith Power and Light Calendars (2023 & 2024), [2024 Creation Care Calendar New Mexico United Women in Faith](#), and The Holy Bible! Feb 17, 2025