

First Congregational Church of Montclair, NJ






Creation Justice Lenten Calendar 2026: A Spiritual Practice for Lent

“For God so loved the world...” John 3:16











Woven into Jesus’s journey was his radical love of all God’s children, as well as the elements, and the vast abundance of living beings. During Lent, let us reflect each day not only on our relationships with God and each other, but on the whole of God’s creation. Today, our planet is in crisis due to the actions of humans. We can use this guide to inspire us to take an active role in transforming the climate crisis into climate solutions.























fccmontclair.org/

Spiritual Sunday	Meatless Monday	Take Action Tuesday	Waste Free Wednesday	Thankful Thursday	Feel Good Friday	Songful Saturday
Theme: Light Genesis 1:3 “And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light.”						
 <p>fccmontclair.org/creation-justice-church/</p>			<p>February 18 Ash Wednesday “The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.” -John 1:5</p>  Find out more about solar energy. Here’s a start: tinyurl.com/zh986pwu <p>Read this call to action from Bill McKibben: tinyurl.com/ycy2azf4</p>	<p>19 Prayer: “Be praised, my Lord, ...for Brother Sun, ...is beautiful and radiant, with great splendor; he is the image of you, Most High...” -St. Francis of Assisi</p> <p>Investigate free and low-cost ways of saving energy: tinyurl.com/ms5y3ne3</p>  Spread the word!	<p>20 Remember that as well as providing energy, sunshine provides many health benefits! tinyurl.com/5bupdbjv</p>  <p>“The sun does not shine for a few trees and flowers, but for the wide world’s joy.” -Henry Ward Beecher</p>	<p>21 Many songs express hope through light, from gospels like, “This Little Light of Mine” tinyurl.com/2s7c5558 to pop songs such as “Here Comes the Sun.” tinyurl.com/4w5a4byr</p>  <p>This Lent be hopeful. Consider addressing the climate crisis in additional ways.</p>

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Spiritual Sunday	Meatless Monday	Take Action Tuesday	Waste-Free Wednesday	Thankful Thursday	Feel Good Friday	Songful Saturday
Theme: Fire Exodus 13:21 "...the LORD went ahead of them...by night in a pillar of fire to give them light..."						
February 22 In <i>Discovering Fire</i> , Roger Wolsey shares spiritual practices that help us heal, grow, and thrive. tinyurl.com/562c3kk5  Prayer: Oh, Creator, help grow our respect for all elements of your handiwork. Amen.	23 Fire Cider is a traditional herbal tonic. A recipe: tinyurl.com/2reuvs7  We lament that wildfires have caused vast destruction and are made worse by human caused climate change. We can do something. tinyurl.com/2s9uy2uh	24 Wildfires impact air quality which impacts health. Perhaps contact your elected officials through the Lung Action Network tinyurl.com/4u278n6 to show your support for lung health. usa.gov/elected-officials #Asthma, #COPD, #LungCancer, #CleanAir4Kids	25 How efficient is our home's heating system? It can certainly have a big impact on the bottom line for our home budget and a huge impact on pollution and climate change.  Explore some heat pump systems: tinyurl.com/3vdt2swz	26 Managed fire has been vital to human flourishing.  Excavations show evidence of hearths used for cooking & making tools dating back 400,000 years. Prayer: Gracious God, we give thanks for the creativity of our ancestors. Amen.	27 Centering ourselves through meditation, yoga, and/or prayer can help prepare us for the day's challenges, advocacy, and simply, our calling. "Breath of Fire" is a yoga breathing technique that can be useful for some people. Learn more: tinyurl.com/y8vd7uy3	28 There are hundreds of songs with a theme of fire, from classical to rock, folk, heavy metal, country and jazz. One example is the traditional hymn, "O Spirit of the Living God." tinyurl.com/ec94uavp 
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Theme: Water Psalm 104:10 "You make springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills..."						
March 1 Prayer: Creator of the universe, inspire us as we reflect on Psalm 104:10. Water is a gift from you and essential to life. Yet, it is affected by the climate crisis in devastating ways. Motivate us to be part of climate solutions. Amen. 	2 Maybe try out a new veggie soup today?  Here are 27 ideas: tinyurl.com/bh68_sabn9 Plant-based diets can save water and help the eco-system. To learn more about this: tinyurl.com/2vfhtc67	3 The climate crisis is making extreme weather events, like severe flooding, happen more often. Prayerfully consider following and/or supporting groups that work on this issue. Some possibilities: tinyurl.com/3tjxu9u9 or tinyurl.com/2wk8u23r 	4 Think about adding another sustainable practice to your repertoire today.  Install a low flow shower head to save water and energy if you haven't already, or look into another waste reducing practice. Here is a good resource: tinyurl.com/b9mps7ru	5 Prayer: "God of blessings, the universe sings of your glory. Deepen our gratitude for all you have made and awaken in us a renewed commitment to care for earth and each other..." -Adapted from "COP27 Climate Summit Prayer" from EcoJesuits. tinyurl.com/4heak8v	6 Remember to hydrate today to keep your body feeling its best. Refill that FCC reusable water bottle before you leave your home.  And please continue those important efforts to skip single-use plastic whenever possible. It helps! tinyurl.com/8ueveyv3	7 Water aided some people who were enslaved to escape their oppressors. Sweet Honey in the Rock honors this history with their beautiful version of "Wade in the Water." tinyurl.com/yz9dvkhf Reflect today on FCC's "Closing Commission" that helps bind us as a community of faith.
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Spiritual Sunday	Meatless Monday	Take Action Tuesday	Waste-Free Wednesday	Thankful Thursday	Feel Good Friday	Songful Saturday
Theme: Wind/Air John 3:8 "The wind blows where it wishes....So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit".						
March 8 Prayer: "Oh, Great Spirit, whose voice I hear the winds and whose breath gives life to all the world, hear me! I need your strength and wisdom...Let me learn the lessons you have hidden in every leaf and rock..." -Earth Prayer, Chief Yellow Lark	9 Eating meat-free meals reduces the 3 rd largest source of greenhouse gasses: livestock farming. Preparing yummy meat-free meals is easier than you might think.  Try some easy, breezy recipes: tinyurl.com/ru445zy9	10 Wind energy is a clean alternative to fossil fuels. It can help with the climate crisis, but disinformation and policies are blocking wind energy's expansion. Learn what NJ Wind Works is doing to fight for wind energy in NJ and how you can help. njwindworks.org	11 Waste is damaging the environment, including the air we breathe.  Yet, manufacturers profit from waste and encourage folks to buy endlessly. Follow 5 Rs: refuse, reduce, reuse, repurpose and recycle. tinyurl.com/mv6yc9w6	12 "Who has seen the wind? Neither you nor I. But when the trees bow down their heads, the wind is passing by." -Christina Rossetti  Prayer: God, as I listen to this poem in song, let me be grateful and honor the wind. Amen. tinyurl.com/bdftz965	13 Let fresh air lift your spirits today.  Fly a kite, take a walk, watch the leaves dance ...or just breathe. For an extra dose of "feel good," visit Climate Action Now. Make a difference – it only takes a few minutes. tinyurl.com/5ezyf32t	14 Can we really turn things around in this turbulent world? Listen to the classic song "Blowin' in the Wind" and know in your heart that, yes, we can. All we have to do is learn, care, and lift our voices together! tinyurl.com/y5urzpf8 
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Theme: Plants Psalm 65 "...hills are clothed with gladness...The meadows...and the valleys...shout for joy and sing."						
March 15 Read Psalm 65, a song of David. tinyurl.com/3dc6vy7n  See the creative power of God, bringing life and beauty through nature. Prayer: Holy One, help us to realize our dependence on plants. Keep us grateful. Amen.	16 Did you know the climate crisis is causing chemical changes in plants due to increased CO ₂ in the atmosphere? tinyurl.com/mr24nwwy  Plants are food for us - we need them! To reduce CO ₂ we can cut back on meat and dairy. tinyurl.com/4f9d8kf5	17 Often fruits and vegetables are packaged in plastic at the store. Did you know plastic is made from fossil fuels? Take action and get some mesh bags to use and reuse as you purchase unpackaged veggies. 	18 Reducing food waste is vital to reducing CO ₂ emissions. We can do it! tinyurl.com/3asmh36w Some ideas: Eat leftovers. Make and use a shopping list. Look for discounts on ugly fruits and veggies. They can taste good! tinyurl.com/247dajtw tinyurl.com/3uvvaxsn	19 Prayer: Let us take time today to thank you, God, for all these amazing lifeforms we call plants. They give us so much oxygen, food, timber, shade, flowers, medicines and material for clothes. They make our lives whole. Help us to protect them. Amen.	20 A 20 minute nature break helps you FEEL GOOD!  Find some green space and feel your anxiety decrease. Rest your mind in the surety of nature. Some ideas for local walks: tinyurl.com/3k9ujjw But around the block works, too!	21 Many folk songs tell stories based on the environment. Watch and listen to John Denver sing "The Garden Song": tinyurl.com/42p5xz77 What friends of the garden are included in the song? 
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Spiritual Sunday	Meatless Monday	Take Action Tuesday	Waste-Free Wednesday	Thankful Thursday	Feel Good Friday	Songful Saturday
Theme: Animals Psalm 50:11 "I know every bird in the sky, and the creatures of the fields are in my sight."						
March 22 "All things of creation are...brothers of man...Every creature in distress has the...right to be protected." -St. Francis of Assisi  Prayer: God, guide us as we ponder how to enjoy and also safeguard the planet. Amen.	23 We save land for wildlife habitats when we eat meatless meals.  Try this vegetarian dish as colorful as a toucan: tinyurl.com/5n6582y7 Add some animal crackers for dessert!	24 Protecting wildlife is a global concern. Check out this film for inspiration, and learn what some groups are doing. <i>Escape from extinction - Rewilding.</i> tinyurl.com/vcxfziku Find out about the abundance of wildlife in NJ: tinyurl.com/yxup2a2m	25 Plastic pollution and pesticides accelerate the climate crisis and hurt all living creatures on land, air and sea.  Here are two links to delve deeper into these global issues: tinyurl.com/ymh6vfzt tinyurl.com/4bxzw5xm	26 Prayer: Mighty Creator, help us be full of gratitude for animals who play critical roles in regulating the atmosphere's CO ₂ balance. Amen. Learn about carbon sequestration. It's cool! tinyurl.com/59cwzhhb 	27 The children's story below is autobiographical & written by a big cat conservationist. tinyurl.com/ywuuc56r  For even more inspiration, check out "Nine Uplifting Environmental Stories of Hope." tinyurl.com/4ssu8r49	28 Tap your feet & sing a happy song today.  Here's one about God's love for all. "A Place in the Choir": tinyurl.com/3c8rkufy Tonight, consider joining Earth Hour by switching off all electricity at 8:30 p.m. or "give an hour for earth." earthhour.org
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Theme: The Human Community Galatians 6: 2 "Bear one another's burdens and so you will fulfill the law of Christ."						
March 29 Palm Sunday "...Be on your guard against ...greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." — Luke 12:15  Prayer: Lord, grant us relief from the consumer culture. Amen.	30 Here's a recipe for chickpea and vegetable tagine: tinyurl.com/2w8ndy9e The ecological burden of meat production doesn't stay in one place; it runs off to high-risk communities and the most food insecure. Learn more: tinyurl.com/2vdx7y7	31 Due to the climate crisis, millions face rising seas, failed crops, and extreme heat. tinyurl.com/ymp5anvn Scripture reminds us that good intentions are not enough. We must take action. Here are 29 resources: tinyurl.com/2ybs3_r5z 	April 1 The burden of our waste falls largely on environmental justice communities. tinyurl.com/d45yizdy  Every change we make helps lower these burdens. There are also health benefits of consuming less: tinyurl.com/bbpbz4hn	2 Maundy Thursday "What do you have that you did not receive?" -1 Corinthians 4:7 How can we use God's gifts so that no one will suffer? A poem for this journey... "Beloved is Where We Begin" by Rev. Jan Richardson: tinyurl.com/4e4kjbs3	3 Good Friday Today we remember Jesus's sacrifice... We also admit the climate crisis is causing havoc through heat, hunger, and displacement. Good Friday calls us toward truth, compassion, and costly love. For some sustenance: tinyurl.com/yc3t2n9c	4 "Some days there won't be a song in your heart. Sing anyway." -Emory Austin  Songs like "Paradise" tinyurl.com/bdzeycrw and "This Land Is Your Land" tinyurl.com/3ehs57ad highlight that the earth is our common Inheritance.
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