



Because the world can change a lot in 40 days.

Lenten Creation Care 2024



VAIPL's theme this year is **"Reclaiming our future."** During the six weeks of Lent, we invite you to consider the ways in which the powers that be can convince us to believe that current negative trajectories are unchangeable as a way to discourage us from faithful action. This year, amid many daunting challenges, we commit to reclaiming our shared future from those narratives, instead embracing a spirit of prophetic imagination and taking to heart these words from Jeremiah 29:11: "I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." Let us act in line with our belief that the future is flexible, and God works with us for ecological renewal.

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
Week Theme: Mindfulness in Daily Life						
February 11 Prayer: Loving Creator, As you have given us a new heart in Christ, give us new eyes to see the hope and opportunity in current events and the world around us, no matter how challenging they may be. Amen	12 Meatless Monday New Netflix series "You Are What you Eat: A Twin Experiment," suggests that eating a vegan diet leads to better heart health, and simply eating less meat and more plants has substantial health benefits. Food for thought!	13 Inject fresh energy into your recycling efforts by watching our EJ Now episode on the 5 R's: Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Rot, and Recycle. https://bit.ly/3Sposfy	14 Ash Wednesday Reflect with gratitude on the reality that we all are made of and fed by the earth, and to the earth we will return.	15 Remove one light bulb in your house and live without it during Lent as a reminder of the luxury of having electricity.	16 When leaving your house for travel or work, use your own water bottle and eating utensils. Plastic bottles and disposable dishes do not decompose organically but create permanent pollution.	17 To save money in home heating bills, caulk and weatherstrip around doors and windows to plug air leaks.
Week Theme: Recognizing God's Abundance						
18 Prayer: Sustainer of all, gently bring our attention to all that which you have given us, and help us to understand that contentment and abundance are found in simplicity, not overconsumption. Amen	19 Meatless Monday As you fast from meat today, consider the abundance that God has created just in our backyards by checking out the work of Alexis Nikole Nelson aka Black Forager. https://bit.ly/3O6DnJd	20 Switch to bamboo toilet paper. Bamboo is a quickly renewable resource, while trees takes years to grow.	21 Shop local for groceries and staples when you are able. If you have access to a farmer's market, buy from them. Find abundance in the unique character of your neighborhood, rather than big box monotony!	22 Purchase clothing from thrift stores. It shrinks the footprint of raw materials and supports the recycling economy. Plus, your clothes will all be one of a kind AND thrifting is fun!	23 Switch to rechargeable batteries. Americans throw away more than 80,000 tons of single-use alkaline batteries every year.	24 Invest in a programmable thermostat. Aim for 68 degrees during the day and 60 degrees at night.
Week Theme: Leading with Light						
25 Prayer: Creator of the Sun, Moon, and Stars, every day the sun rises, reminding us of the warm light of your love for us. We pray that you illuminate our path forward, leading us into a brighter future. Amen.	26 Meatless Monday Try a few fruit and/or vegetable smoothies and juices today. Try composting the peels and residual. Even in the winter, Mother Nature can turn food scraps and yard trimmings into fertilizer while reducing landfill waste and CO2.	27 The Inflation Reduction Act has made it possible for congregations to reap solar tax credits through election pay. Learn more and register your house of worship here: http://IRS.gov/EPRegister	28 International Women's Day From grid power to girl power! Solar employs more women than any other energy sector. 40% of solar PV employees are women, compared to 22% in fossil fuels.	29 Replace incandescent light bulbs and CFLs with LEDs. Each bulb replaced will save hundreds of pounds of climate pollution over time.	March 1 Commit to getting one piece of solar equipment- a solar light, a solar charger for your phone, or solar building panels. Sunlight is our most abundant natural resource!	2 Many environmental justice communities are financially burdened by utility bills in times of crisis. Learn more about our advocacy to protect the most vulnerable households against utility shut offs. https://bit.ly/42cXE5K

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
Week Theme: <i>On the Road to a Hopeful Future</i>						
3 World Wildlife Day Prayer: God, you accompany us on our walk through life. We ask that you help us grow more aware of the ways we physically move through your world, and guide our movements to be gentler on the earth.	4 Meatless Monday In addition to eschewing meat, pay extra attention to how far your food has traveled. How many of your groceries can you source from your town, state, or region?	5 Petition and lobby Congress to support mass transit construction, higher miles per gallon standards for trucks, and more incentives for hybrid/electric vehicles. Plan to join our Ride the Bus Week this coming May.	6 Obey the speed limit when driving. Every 10 mph faster reduces fuel economy by about 4 miles per gallon, regardless of vehicle size.	7 Check your tire pressure. Low tire pressure means high energy/fuel consumption.	8 How much energy is being used on items that are mailed or shipped to you? Reduce online shopping, and stop unwanted mail in your mailbox to save trees, cut down on carbon emissions, and reduce waste.	9 Fast from driving today. Walk, bike, or use public transportation.
Week Theme: <i>Making our Gardens and Forests Grow</i>						
10 Prayer: God of hope, who filled our world with trees to shade us, create fresh air, and feed us with delicious fruits and nuts, we repent from overconsumption, and ask for guidance in living as stewards, not destroyers, of your forests.	11 Meatless Monday Buy organically grown produce, which is pesticide and fertilizer free. Try a new vegan recipe here https://bit.ly/4b4w3HF	12 International Day of Forests Use time today to plan a garden and figure out the seeds you will need. Locally source the seeds. Start collecting seeds for your spring garden, lettuces, spinach, and greens are good choices.	13 Plant plenty of vegetable and flower bulbs that are native to your region.	14 World Meteorological Day Fertilize with mulch, compost, and manure; use natural methods to remove pests.	15 Find ways to save paper. Set your computer printer to print on both sides.	16 Restore your home or church landscape and support the local wildlife by planting native. Learn more about the Plant Natives Initiative in your region. plantvirginianatives.org
Week Theme: <i>Practicing and Celebrating Good Leadership</i>						
17 Prayer: God has given each and every one of us unique gifts to use to work with God for a more just world for all. Spend a few moments considering your own gifts, and the ways in which God is calling you to lead.	18 Meatless Monday Do you like to cook for others? Cook a big vegetarian meal for family or friends, or plan to bring a meatless meal to your next potluck.	19 Commit to using glassware and cloth napkins/towels at home. Over 40% of the US carbon footprint is from the making of, moving, and disposing of single use plastics.	20 Do you know anyone dedicated to environmental justice work in your community? Visit vaipl.org/environmental-justice-hall-of-fame to nominate a candidate for VA IPL's Environmental Justice Hall of Fame.	21 The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) provides funds to create resiliency for vulnerable residents. Learn more about RGGI's importance and take action. bit.ly/edfrggi	22 Interested in advocating for environmental justice with VA IPL? Sign up to volunteer with us at https://vaipl.org/volunteer/	23 Make a list of the things you throw away today. Identify wasteful items you can eliminate from your daily habits.
Week Theme: <i>Stirring the Waters of Justice</i>						
24 Palm Sunday Prayer: The Word of God begins with the good news that God's ruach (breath) has gone out over the waters. Let us respect water as a source of life and means of baptism. Hold some water in your hand and reflect on your connection to God.	25 Meatless Monday Make water your drink of choice. Turn the water off when washing dishes, brushing teeth or washing up. This is the last meatless Monday in Lent. Consider committing to meatless Mondays as a lifestyle change or go vegetarian or vegan.	26 If you have the ability, use rain barrels to collect rainwater or snow runoff. It will reduce the amount of water needed for your garden.	27 Install low-flow fittings on your shower head and sink faucets to limit your water use without sacrificing functionality.	28 Turn the water off while brushing your teeth. A running tap uses about 4 gallons per minute. Teach this habit to your children and grandchildren, too.	29 Good Friday World Health Day Time how long it takes you to shower and set a goal to reduce that time. Use an alarm to make sure you're on track.	30 Holy Saturday When you have planted your garden, only water in the evening or early morning to reduce evaporation, or use a soaker hose.

31 Easter "Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed." - Psalm 19:1

Reflect on all you have accomplished during Lent and what you will carry with you into this new season. How has your frame of mind changed? How will you respond to VA IPL's theme for this year, *Reclaiming Our Future*? Conclude your Lenten creation care practice by making a personal pledge to advocate for an environmentally just and resilient world with your faith community, legislature, and in your neighborhood.

