

52 Eco Top Tips 2019

For your weekly parish newsletter

Here are some snappy little tips for you to post week by week in your church newsletter.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Report, October 2018, made it plain that we must cut our carbon emissions by half in the next 10 years to stay below 1.5°C global warming and so prevent devastating climate destruction.

So this year's eco tips give lots of handy tips for every household to understand and control their carbon emissions, as an act of love for Christ's creation and our fellow human beings.

The average UK citizen currently generates an average of 12 tonnes of carbon emissions a year. If each member of your congregation shaves off 1 tonne a year and encourages their family and friends to do the same we are well on the way to halving our emission in the next 10 years.

1 tonne = 1000 kilograms (kg)

1 kg = 1000 grams (g)

CO₂e = carbon dioxide equivalent. There are a variety of different greenhouse gases that are contributing to making the earth warmer, such as methane, nitrous oxide and carbon dioxide. But to make it simpler all our greenhouse gases are measured in carbon dioxide equivalents.

January - On the internet

1. Enjoy texting: at 0.014g of carbon dioxide a text it's a very low carbon cost way to communicate
2. Think before you click: each web search requires energy on your computer, laptop or 'phone and more at the server finding the webpage for you, costing 4.5g CO₂e a time. Just 10 searches a day adds up to 16.5kg CO₂e a year.
3. Switch to using a green search engine on the internet such as www.ecosia.org, which plants trees to absorb the carbon emissions from your web searches.
4. Email with care: an email generates 4g CO₂e and a large email with lots of attachments up to 50g. Don't stop communicating, but think before you copy everyone in!

February – Be informed

1. Are you responsible for more or less than the average UK carbon footprint of 12 tonnes CO₂e (carbon dioxide equivalent)? Challenge yourself to reduce by 1 tonne this year. Climate Stewards have an easy to use carbon calculator www.climatestewards.org
2. Find out how to reduce your carbon footprint: listen to the New Year's Solutions 15 minute guides on Radio 4's. Go to BBC Sounds and search *New Year's Solutions*
3. Read a book to become more "carbon literate" and understand the greenhouse gas cost of your choices. Try *"How Bad are Bananas? The Carbon Footprint of Everything"* Mike Burners-Lee
4. Do your own internet research to become more "carbon literate": choose one item a day this week to find out what its carbon "cost" is. For example a kg of rice produces 4kg of CO₂e in production or a kg of potatoes is 0.37kg CO₂e.

March – Lent Lament

1. For each day of Lent pray of one thing in creation that you care about, for example birds in the garden, your favourite food, your car. Thank God for it, lament if it is being damaged by human action or causing harm, and intercede for wisdom and Christ's renewal.
2. Set aside time each week in Lent to go for a walk (or look out the window if you are not able) and actively appreciate Christ's creation, remembering that we are wholly dependent on it for our survival.
3. Join a prayer group at church (or start one if you have to) and intercede for the renewal of creation, for example pray local eco projects, halting species extinction, slowing down climate change. Find monthly intercession updates at www.prayandfastfortheclimate.org.uk
4. Join (or start) an eco-group in your church/town/village to be part of the renewal of Christ's creation. Community environmental groups need the hope that Christian's can bring.
5. Read the Easter story in one or all of the gospels. Think how you and your church will join with the whole community of creation in celebrating the salvation, renewal and new birth that Jesus' death and resurrection brings to all things.

April - Money Magic

1. Spend less money! Just about every pound we spend has environmental costs (except investing in environmental projects). So with wealth comes more responsibility.
2. Donate to charities that alleviate the effects of climate change, as well as being compassionate to our local, global and generational neighbours it can save you 500kg CO₂e a year.

3. Move your bank account to an ethical bank who invests your money in low carbon, ethical, environmental projects, such as the Triodos Bank. Ethical Consumer (like *Which?*) provide independent advice www.ethicalconsumer.org
4. Move your pension, if you can, to an ethical environmental provider who is not investing your money in fossil fuels. Ethical Consumer (like *Which?*) provide independent advice www.ethicalconsumer.org

May - Holiday highlights

1. Have a “staycation” or use public transport to travel abroad. A return flight to Greece emits 1 tonne CO₂e – your whole 2019 reduction target!
2. Think twice before you book a cruise: the environmental impact is greater than a flight with CO₂e emissions of 640g per person per mile.
3. If you are staying away choose your hotel carefully. Depending on the level of luxury, meat served, food wasted, energy wasted with excess heating etc your night could cost you 3 to 60kg CO₂e per person per night.
4. Slow down and relax on: Drive at 60mph on the motorway and 50mph on main roads and save 10% on fuel and CO₂e emissions.

June - Share the love

1. Plan an event at in your garden, or at your church, the local park or in the churchyard and invite your community to come and enjoy some outdoor fun in God’s creation.
2. Talk to a friend or family member this week about your concerns about an environmental issue. Listen to what they think. Share one thing you have done or want to do to try to be bring the good news for all creation.
3. Talk to your PCC about using the Eco Church scheme ecochurch.arocha.org.uk to help your church reduce its environmental impact (and get an award!).
4. Join the Climate Coalition Speak Up week www.theclimatecoalition.org to voice your concerns about our children’s futures, to our elected representatives.
5. Write to your local councillor or MP about a local or national eco issue. There are top tips on how at www.hftf.org.uk . Be polite, don’t make it about party politics and make sure you are not being a NYBY.

July –Transport Tips

1. Half the carbon cost of every car journey by car sharing. A medium car emits 360g of CO₂ a mile whether it has one, two or more people in it. Join a car share club online and save up to £1000 a year.
2. If you are driving show love and respect to cyclists by improving your road behaviour. Their bike mile has a carbon footprint of 2g compared to your small car of 280g CO₂e a mile.

3. Be loving to others by taking the train or coach when you can. It helps ease congestion by taking your car off the road and has half the carbon footprint of a small car (coach 80g and train 100g CO₂e per person per mile).
4. If you are in your car show love and respect to pedestrians. Park on the road, not on their pavement - think pushchairs and disability scooters. Their walking mile has a carbon footprint of 1g compared to your small car of 280g CO₂e a mile.

August - In your wardrobe

1. All clothing and shoes have an environmental impact. Buy less, but longer lasting products if you can. A pair of shoes has an average carbon footprint of 11.5kg CO₂e, and a pair of trousers 3kg CO₂e.
2. Buy clothing that is easy to wash and dry. About half of the environmental impact of a garment's life is the energy needed to wash it in your washing machine and tumble dryer. Don't wash clothes too often – is it really dirty?!
3. Extend the life of your clothing and shoes by looking after them and mending. Wear them, use them, until they fall apart, then donate or recycle rather than binning old clothes and shoes.
4. Set yourself a clothing challenge. Can you replenish your wardrobe for a year from second hand shops? (You may wish to exclude underwear!)

September - At the shops

1. Think before you buy: gold does not always glitter brightly. A new £500 gold necklace has a carbon emissions tag of 400kg CO₂e, the mining process damages landscapes, ecosystems and contaminates water, and can be associated with human rights violations.
2. Think before you buy: the manufacture of a new car uses a lot of energy and resources which generate 6 tonnes CO₂e for a small vehicle (more than half your total year's carbon budget), 17 tonnes for an estate car and up to 35 tonnes for a top of the range Discovery Land Rover.
3. Buy local and in season produce and look forward to seasonal changes. For example a punnet of strawberries flown in or grown locally in a hothouse in winter has a 1.8kg CO₂e emissions cost. Whereas locally grown in the UK in summer its only 0.15kg a punnet.
4. Do you really need a new computer, laptop or phone? Manufacturing new goods has a high environmental cost. A new laptop has a carbon footprint of 200kg and a high end desk top 800kg CO₂e.
5. Think ahead to Christmas! How can you show love in your gift giving without costing the earth? Discuss having a Secret Santa or a price limit with family members, choose small thoughtful presents, or hand make gifts.

October - What's on the menu?

1. Think about your food before it reaches your table. 45% of the carbon emissions from food comes from production (on the farm), 28% in food processing, 7% in packaging and 19% from transport. Home grown has the lowest carbon footprint!
2. Learn how to cook a new vegetarian or vegan meal each week. Why? Switching to plant based protein is better for your health and carbon budget. 1kg weight: beef/lamb 19kg CO₂e (cows and sheep burp methane); chicken 4.5kg CO₂e; beans 2kg CO₂e; and lentils 0.9 kg CO₂e.
3. Cut back on cheese and dairy products. Cows burp methane a very strong greenhouse gas. Eat more plant based alternatives like oat or soya "milk", hummus, olives, nuts and seeds.
4. Stick to tap water. Bottled water comes with a 320g per litre carbon footprint, whereas tap water is a mere 0.24g CO₂e per litre. If you don't like the taste of your home tap water, install an under the sink water filter.

November - Around the home

1. If in doubt switch to off: it is never more efficient to leave appliances running when you are not using them. Make sure you switch everything off at the plug before you go out and before you go to bed.
2. Ensure your heating is switch off at night and when you are away from your home (except in sub-zero conditions) and save 500kg CO₂e a year. Don't heat rooms you don't use, turn the radiator off and close the door.
3. Read your meters monthly to check how much fuel you are using. This kind of monitoring can save on your fuel bills and also up to 250kg CO₂e a year, as you keep a closer eye on your energy use.
4. Find out if you have any unfilled cavity walls and (if yes) have them filled. This extra insulation can make a significant difference to the comfort of your home and save over 1 tonne of CO₂e.

December - Christmas Crackers

1. Real trees have a much lower carbon footprint than artificial ones, especially if disposed of by wood-chipping. An artificial tree would need to be reused for ten years to be comparable.
2. This Advent ponder on Jesus' coming to be with us on earth. How are we preparing His creation for Him to live with us here? Pray for grace and wisdom to play your part in caring for creation.
3. Watch your shopping trolley. In the UK our food spend increases by 16% in December, make sure you are not over catering and that extras are not going to end up in the bin.

4. Celebrate the joy of Jesus coming to be with us. Wonder at his incarnating, He embraced being human, vulnerable and very much part of the creation that He made to restore it all back into peace with God.
5. Calculate your carbon footprint for 2019 at Climate Stewards www.climatestewards.org. Did you make any reductions this year? Take responsibility for your 2019 emissions by carbon offsetting. Set a target for 2020.

References:

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How Bad are Bananas? The Carbon Footprint of Everything Mike Burners-Lee 2010 Profile Books
Limited