



Because the world *can* change a lot in 40 days.

Lenten Creation Care 2023



VAIPL's theme this year is **"Resilience: Cultivating Peace with Nature"**. During the six weeks of Lent, discuss with your families, co-workers, and faith community the urgency to reduce our country's reliance on polluting infrastructure, which severely threatens the health of Creation. We can make a difference, but we have to first acknowledge the scale of the problem and seek to change the attitudes and behaviors of our government and corporate sectors. This calendar will help you cultivate peace with nature and your neighbor as a spiritual practice.

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
Week Theme: Mobility Justice – The Freedom to Move						
February 19 Prayer: Gracious Creator, guide us in transforming our lives to walk gently with our fellow creatures. Renew our eyes to see the value in each living thing and care for one another in our actions, travels, and relationships. Amen	20 Meatless Monday Did you know? There are more than 280 farmers markets in VA! Support locally grown food and cut down on emissions caused by transporting food long distances. Find your local farmers market at bit.ly/VAfarmersmarkets	21 People rely on public transportation for access to work, school, and play. Thanks to advocates, we secured fare-free GRTC through July 2024 in Greater Richmond! Show your support and sign the petition at bit.ly/ZeroFare	22 Ash Wednesday <i>"Lent comes providentially to reawaken us, to shake us from our lethargy."</i> - Pope Francis During this Lenten season, how do you want to show up? Where do you need to be shaken up?	23 Learn about what equitable and walkable mobility could look like in Virginia by watching our EJ Now! show. bit.ly/mobilityjusticeVA	24 Grab a copy of <i>The Seven Circles: Indigenous Teachings for Living Well</i> for a weekly book discussion starting 3/7. Join us to continue thinking deeply about your movement with the Earth. bit.ly/sevencirclesbook	25 Try parking your car for a day or a week. Take public transit instead. It lessens the wear and tear on your car and reduces emissions from individually used vehicles.
Week Theme: Being Mindful of Waste						
26 Prayer: Sustainer of all, keep us ever mindful of our place on this Earth. Let us rebuke the temptation to abuse it for our own comfort. Instead, let us treat it with reverence as we are called to care for your creation. Amen	27 Meatless Monday As you fast from meat today, consider how our excesses and addiction to luxury have harmed our world. Implement ways to faithfully care for Creation at bit.ly/GreenLivingWorship	28 Bring your own bags when you shop this week. Eliminating single-use bags—whether plastic, paper, or another material—lowers the overall environmental cost. The most sustainable choice is the bag you already have!	March 1 Do a plastic fast for the rest of the week to see just how much plastic you use without even realizing it. Commit to using one alternative, like storing leftovers in glass or beeswax covers, for the rest of Lent.	2 Most landfills exist in communities of color that are already overburdened. Learn about Bristol residents as they fight to preserve their community. vaip.org/bristollandfill	3 World Wildlife Day Avoid products with microbeads made of "polyethylene," often used in soaps, body wash, and toothpaste. When microplastics enter our waterways, they cause physical damage to our wildlife, like birds and fish.	4 Read Isaiah 55:1-11 and consider composting your food waste, returning nutrients to the soil. Compost at home or get table scraps picked up: CompostRVA.com , BlackBearComposting.com , nopeVA.com
Week Theme: Honoring Our Sacred Waters						
5 Prayer: Gracious mother, creator of all since the birth of existence, may we see anew your wonders in water. Flowing rivers, rippling streams, crashing waves; you are in all. Grant us your guidance as we magnify the world around us. Amen	6 Meatless Monday You can save up to 133 gallons of water with each meatless meal! Challenge yourself and your faith community to choose meatless options when available.	7 Read Psalm 65 and visit your favorite body of water in your community. Reflect on what it means to you and share your water story at vaip.org/water-stories	8 International Women's Day As climate change makes water more scarce, women are currently having to travel further and further to find water. Read more about how women are disproportionately impacted by climate change and disasters. bit.ly/womenandwaterloss	9 Learn more about ways faith communities improved the water quality of their communities. Reflect on what your congregation can do to improve your local watershed. bit.ly/treeplantingmovement	10 Find out which watershed you live in, and consider how we are all connected through our sacred waterways. Be mindful that what we discard in the water we use, winds up in our watersheds. bit.ly/findyourwatershed	11 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. vaip.org/utility-shutoff-protection

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Week Theme: <i>Environmental Justice Lightens the Load</i>						
12 Prayer: God, conduit of peace and lover of justice, we have not conserved or shared rightly the bounty you have given us. Let us look with gratitude on that which lights our homes, and conserve the energy which we enjoy. Amen	13 Meatless Monday Choosing to do Meatless Monday every week for a year can equate to saving the same amount of CO2 emissions as driving 348 miles in a car. This choice can improve air quality for environmental justice communities.	14 Talk to the leaders of your church about a sermon on just transition and clean energy during Faith Climate Action Week (4/14-23), or invite a VA IPL speaker by emailing contactus@vaipl.org .	15 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.	16 This Saturday (3/18 @ 3pm) in RVA, join VA IPL for a special screening of <i>Mossville: When Great Trees Fall</i> , a story of a once-thriving community burdened by unjust pollution. Register to attend at bit.ly/mossvillefilm_screening	17 Reflect on your understanding of environmental justice. Do you notice any environmental inequities in your neighborhood? How do you extend support for our neighbors in environmental justice communities?	18 Interested in advocating for environmental justice with VA IPL? Sign up to volunteer with us at vaipl.org/volunteer
Week Theme: <i>Cultivating Peace with Nature</i>						
19 Prayer: Read Psalm 23:1-2 aloud. This week, let yourself be led to still waters. Give yourself permission to lie down in green pastures. Seek to re-engage with nature as we are called by God to do, in peace and stillness.	20 Meatless Monday Livestock, and the farming needed to feed them, are the most significant drivers of global deforestation. As we bypass the beef (both meat and dairy) today, we are doing our small part to protect our ecosystems.	21 International Day of Forests Palm oil is in just about every product in the supermarket, and the growing demand is a main driver of rainforest destruction in Indonesia. Find three items you use with palm oil, and pick a palm oil-free alternative for next time.	22 In antiquity and today, communities could not acquire palm leaves for Palm Sunday and used branches of their native trees such as yew, boxwood, willow, or olive. Ask your church to consider native branches in lieu of palm fronds.	23 World Meteorological Day Last year was one of eight warmest years on record, and rising temperatures lead to more extreme weather like heat waves, wildfires, drought, inland, and coastal flooding. Heed nature's cry and take action: bit.ly/worldmeteorologicalday	24 Take a contemplative walk around your neighborhood, park, or nearby wooded area. Listen and look for signs of the Creator's touch on your journey.	25 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>Building Resilience</i>						
26 Prayer: We see the miracle of life all around us. Plants and new life spring from the soil, growing from that which came before. Let us respect this cycle, and reflect on what has come before us. What do we hope to see grow and flourish in our lives? Amen	27 Meatless Monday Livestock production creates more greenhouse gases than the entire transportation sector. This includes all of the cars, trucks, planes, and trains in the world. Eat meatless meals for a day and consider the reduction of your carbon footprint.	28 Uplift environmental justice and climate resilience in your faith community by joining VA IPL's Climate in the Pulpits in the Minbar, & on the Bimah. Learn more and sign up at bit.ly/climateinthepulpits2023	29 Virginia's sea level has risen up to 14 inches since 1950. Consider how this change negatively impacts the health of coastal areas like Mathews County which rely on Virginia's waterways to thrive.	30 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	31 Flooding and rising sea levels threaten 70% of the state's population that reside on the coast. Learn more about the Coastal Resilience Master Plan at dcr.virginia.gov/crmp	April 1 As the effects of climate change worsen, consider how your faith community can be a resilience hub in the face of disaster. Visit bit.ly/faithfulresiliencehub to learn more about ways your community can offer aid in a climate disaster.
Week Theme: <i>Food Justice for Our Neighbors</i>						
2 Palm Sunday Prayer: Let us give thanks for the abundance of food that we have access to. What does access to food look like in your community? May we better meet the needs of our neighbors in the distribution of those things necessary for life. Amen	3 Meatless Monday Invite others over to prepare a meatless meal together. Read Psalm 136: 1-3, 23-26 before you eat and reflect on the blessings that brought this food to your table.	4 How do you travel to the grocery store? Look up your route! Could you walk or bike? If so, give it a try. If not, reflect on what in the built environment limits your access and mobility.	5 Take part in a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) this year. By buying a share in a local farm, you can get a weekly supply of seasonal produce and support the livelihood of a local farmer. Find CSA info using bit.ly/CSAFinder	6 Read John 13:34-35, and reflect on ways that you can tangibly love your neighbor through food. Go a little deeper and consider planting a garden to share your harvest with those who do not have access to freshly grown produce.	7 Good Friday World Health Day Try fasting today and reflect on the racist and oppressive systems that create "food apartheid" in our communities. Use your usual meal time to unlearn the dominant narrative and rethink our food systems. bit.ly/foodapartheidactions	8 Holy Saturday Starting rethinking food in your faith community. Learn from a number of places of worship in Virginia that are applying creative ideas to care for Creation with our quick guide: vaipl.org/rethinkfood

9 Easter *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims God's handiwork.* - Psalm 19:1

Reflect on all you have accomplished during Lent and what you will carry with you into this new season. How will you live in greater harmony with all Creation? How will you respond to VA IPL's theme for this year, *Resilience: Cultivating Peace with Nature*? 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.

