

## Dear Climate Care Friends,

Inspired by the work of the Evangelical Church in America in 2000, the Creation Care Team of the Annisquam Village Church has created this “Virtual Pilgrimage” that we hope will be widely shared. Why are we doing this? As Gail Straub writes,

*“Sustainable living offers us an ongoing opportunity to practice spiritual mindfulness. Each conscious Earth-friendly act--composting, reusing, recycling, repairing, carpooling, eco-wise shopping, and conserving water and energy--is also an act of spiritual mindfulness. It is the degree of mindfulness that we bring to our most ordinary daily acts of sustainability that determines the sacredness of life. Indeed, it is mindfulness that transforms the mundane into the sacred. The recycling bins become daily rounds of Earth awareness, the water and energy saved prayers of gratitude, and the rides shared a collective offering to clean, fresh air. ... Ultimately, skillful stewardship is a blending of reverence with responsibility.*

*Understanding that our destiny is forever linked with the fate of the Earth, that the health of our souls is inextricably related to the health of our planet, is at the heart of stewardship as a spiritual practice. Walking the path of stewardship, we take it one day at a time, just as we do with our spiritual practice. We aspire toward a fresh beginner's mind as we compost, plant trees, shop with green values, conserve, recycle, reuse and repair. This daily practice is made up of humble acts that simplify our lives, offering us the gifts of time, community and creativity...Gently, inexorably, both our spiritual practice and our stewardship are changing us and changing the world.”*

Every blessing,

The AVC Creation Care Team: Jock Bourneuf, Peg Brady, Lindsay Crouse, Nancy Guselli, Peter Lawrence, and Rev. Sue Koehler-Arsenault

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## **1. Organic Food**

**Daily Scripture:** Then the Lord God formed the human from the soil of the ground and breathed breath into its nostrils the breath of life and the human became a living being. And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east and there God put the human whom God had formed. Genesis 2:7-8

**Fact:** Why eat organic? Pesticides, herbicides, rodenticides applied to the environment to control pests, weeds, etc. are harmful to pollinators, wildlife, and human health. They are impossible to wash off of fruits and vegetables. These chemicals degrade very slowly in the environment and can remain in the soil and water. Known as persistent organic pollutants (POPs) these compounds remain in the environment for years and continue to cause damage to human health for decades after they are first applied./[EWG TipSheet-FoodAdditives](#)

### **Commitment:**

*Immediate-* Eat more locally-grown, organic foods including fruit, vegetables and grains. Consider growing your own produce for your family.

*Long term-* Encourage your local market to carry more organic food. Join Cape Ann's "[Backyard Growers](#)" organization to establish vegetable gardens at homes, housing communities, organizations, and schools.

**Family Activity:** Read Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962). There are a number of books and documentaries about Rachel Carson for children. (e.g. Rachel Carson and Her Book That Changed the World by Laurie Lawlor, 2014 & [PBS American Experience: Rachel Carson](#))

**Daily Prayer: Table Prayer by Thich Nhat Hanh** (Buddhist)

"As we are together, praying for peace, let us be truly with each other.

Let us pay attention to our breathing. Let us be relaxed in our bodies and our minds.

Let us be at peace with our bodies and our minds.

Let us be aware of the source of being common to us all and to all living things.

Evoking the presence of the Great Compassion, let us fill our hearts with our own compassion towards ourselves and towards all living beings.

Let us pray that all living beings realize that they are all brothers and sisters, all nourished from the same source of life.

Let us pray that we ourselves cease to be the cause of suffering to each other.

Let us live in a way which will not deprive other beings of air, water, food, shelter, or the chance to live.

With humility, with awareness of the existence of life and of the sufferings going on around us.. Let us pray for the establishment of peace in our hearts and on earth."

**[To learn more: EWG'S 2020 SHOPPER'S GUIDE TO PESTICIDES IN PRODUCE](#)**

## **2. Drinking Water**

**Daily Scripture:** "I was thirsty and you gave me water to drink." -Matthew 25.35

Water is so essential to us, and the water bird showed us where it was. The water and the morning star go together, they are symbols of the Native American Church. For the Cheyenne, we call ourselves the Morning Star people, the beginning of the new day, the beginning of time." Margaret Behan, Cheyenne/Arapaho

**Fact:** How healthy is our drinking water?

Learn about Gloucester water:

<https://www.ewg.org/tapwater/system.php?pws=MA3107000>

Learn about water in other locations: <https://www.ewg.org/tapwater/>

Flint, Michigan is only one of many cities in the U.S. that still does not have clean drinking water. Around the world, one child dies every minute due to preventable water borne illnesses. Globally, at least 2 billion people use a drinking water source contaminated with feces. In less developed countries, 22% of healthcare facilities have no water service. By 2025, half the world's population will be living in water-stressed areas.

<https://www.who.int/news-room/>

Almost 60 percent of America's drinking water originates from national forests—mainly the rivers and streams that run through them. Scientists predict that, by 2071, nearly half of the freshwater basins in the U.S. may not be able to meet the monthly demand for water, partly due to climate change-related deforestation and forest degradation (American Forests.org)

Plastic water bottles are one of the largest contributors to the glut of plastic everywhere including microscopic pieces in our fresh and sea water. And almost all of the bottled waters Consumer Reports tested have detectable levels of PFAs, 'forever chemicals.'

### **Commitment:**

*Immediate-* Purchase a water filter: <https://www.ewg.org/tapwater/water-filter-guide.php>

*Long Term-* Consider ways to improve the water quality in your home and community. For details, see <https://www.ewg.org/tapwater/system.php?pws=MA3107000>

Contact your state representative and senator about sponsoring state legislation for the use of rainwater for flushing toilets.

<https://www.jswcd.org/files/37d34669c/Rainwater+harvesting>

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/water/article/444419>

### **Daily Prayer: Starhawk**

Praise and gratitude to the sacred waters of the world...

We give thanks for the blessed clouds and the rain that brings the gift of life to the land, that eases the thirst of roots, that grows the trees and sustains life even in the dry desert.

We give thanks for the springs that bring life-giving water up from the ground, for the small streams and creeks, for the mighty rivers. We praise the beauty of water, the sparkle of the sunlight on a blue lake, the shimmer of moonlight on the ocean's waves, the white spray of

the waterfall. We take delight in the sweet singing of the dancing stream and the roar of the river in the flood.

We know that water has great powers of healing and cleansing, and we also know that water is vulnerable to contamination and pollution. We ask for help in our work as healers, in our efforts to ensure that the waters of the world run clean and run free, that all the earth's children have the water they need to sustain an abundance of life. Blessed be the water.

### **3. Paper**

#### **Daily Scripture:**

“Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice; let the sea and what fills it resound; Let the plains be joyful and all that is in them. Then let all the trees of the forest rejoice Before the Lord who comes, who comes to govern the earth, to govern the world with justice and the peoples with faithfulness.” Psalm 96.11-13

**Fact:** The U.S., along with China and Japan, lead the world in paper production. In 2018 the U.S. produced 70,674,000 metric tons, and the U.S. leads in per capita paper usage. Paper accounts for 26% of total waste at landfills. Each ton of recycled paper can avoid the use of 17 trees, 380 gallons of oil, 2.3 cubic meters of landfill space, 4000 kilowatts of energy, and 7000 gallons of water. Paper is easy to recycle, yet 55% of global paper supply comes from newly cut trees. Currently an average person in the U.S. uses 680 pounds of paper per year. [Environmental Impact of Paper - TheWorldCounts](#)

If the U.S. cut its office paper use by just a mere 10 percent, or 490,000 metric tons, greenhouse gas emissions would fall by 1.45 million metric tons. This is the equivalent of taking 280,000 cars off the road for a year.

#### **Commitment:**

*Immediate-* Reduce, reduce, reduce. Consider how you can reduce the amount of paper communication in your life. Can you write emails instead of paper memos/letters? Can you read newspapers and magazines online? Today, commit yourself to reducing the amount of paper you consume.

*Immediate-* Instead of using paper or plastic bags when shopping, begin using cloth bags- an easy way to reduce the amount of paper and plastic in our landfills. Go through your wastebasket and recycle that paper. If you store your recycling bin outside, cover your bin to prevent the paper from getting wet, which renders it non recyclable. Replace paper

plates, and store reusable containers in your car for when you travel. Think before you print.

*Long Term-* Commit yourself to using both sides of paper, buy recycled paper, use recycling bins, shred and recycle your classified documents, and refrain from using brightly colored paper which is more toxic. Choose products with the least packaging possible of both paper and plastic.

### **Family Activity:**

Wrapping paper can only be used once. Instead engage your children/grandchildren in a make your own gift wrap project. Use those brown paper bags and allow the kids to create festive and personalized hand drawn decorations. Recycle those Christmas cards into gift tags for next Christmas.

### **Daily Prayer: by e.e. cummings**

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 is yes--

### **To Learn More:**

<https://www.tiredearth.com/articles/less-paper-save-forests-rescue-envirment>

## **4. Lightbulbs**

**Daily Scripture:** “You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to God in heaven.” Matthew 5:14-15

**Fact:** There are about six billion screw-in sockets in homes across the USA. Two to three billion of those still have inefficient incandescent or halogen light bulbs. If every home in the country switched those sockets to LEDs at once, we’d save 38 million tons of CO2 emissions a year. That’s equivalent to the emissions from about seven million cars. On average, every household would save \$100 a year on its electric bill.

### **Commitment:**

*Immediate-*

Replace your incandescent or halogen light bulb with LED bulbs. LED bulbs last 50,000 hours, or 50 times longer than an incandescent bulb. This will save money and reduce greenhouse gasses. Watch how you use lights in your house. Turn off lights when you are

not in rooms or at home.

*Long Term* -Look at ways you can do a full retrofit of the lighting in your home or business.

**Family Activity:** Have a no electricity night with your children or grandchildren . Make it fun by playing charades by the fireplace or candlelight. Sit outside and tell stories using the sounds of the neighborhood. This allows youngsters to discover their dependence on power in its absence, and appreciating electricity will be the result.

**Daily Prayer: by Jose Arguelles (From the New Thought tradition)**

From the East, House of Light, May wisdom dawn in us so we may see all things in clarity.

From the North, House of Night, May wisdom ripen in us so we may know all from within.

From the West, House of Transformation, May wisdom be transformed into right action

So we may do what must be done.

From the South, House of the Eternal Sun, May right action reap the harvest

So we may enjoy the fruits of being.

**5. Alternatives to Driving**

**Daily Scripture:** You must walk the way that the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live, and that it may go well with you, and that you may live long in the land that you are to possess. *Deuteronomy 5.33*

**Facts:** Where and when practical, walking and/or riding a bike are much better alternatives to driving. There are tremendous health and environmental benefits. It is estimated that there are 1.5 billion cars in the world and 1 billion bicycles. In 2018, cycling made up just 1% of the total road traffic. The percentage of children that walk or cycle to school has dropped from 82% to just 14% in the last 30 years.

Walking connects us to nature. Walking strengthens the heart and helps the lungs operate more efficiently. Walking boosts the immune system, enhances the nervous system, helps circulation, maintains bone density, strengthens the digestive system and cognitive function. It is an ideal non stressful way to help manage weight.

**Commitment:**

*Immediate-* Use the energy of your own body to get around. Examine your driving habits. How can you maximize your car trips for multiple errands? Walk, ride a bike or take the CATA bus whenever possible. Use this [walking map](#) of Gloucester to explore the city on foot. You might meet your neighborhood and community in new ways or catch the smell of

the sea. You can find the CATA bus schedule here: <http://www.canntran.com/>

*Long term-* [Join](#) Cape Ann Mass in Motion to explore the potential of having a regional bike master plan. Advocate for less sprawl so that it would be easier and more possible to walk and bike (<http://www.sierraclub.org/sprawl/>)

**Family Activity:** Go for a nature walk. [AllTrails](#) provides trail guides and maps for over 100,000 trails across the United States. Essex County [Greenbelt](#) highlights favorite local trails.

### **Daily Prayer: Gaelic Blessing**

Deep peace of the running wave to you. Deep peace of the flowing air to you.

Deep peace of the quiet earth to you. Deep peace of the shining stars to you.

Deep peace of the infinite peace to you.

### **6. Local Food**

#### **Daily Scripture:**

You, O God, cause the grass to grow for the cattle, and plants for people to use, to bring forth food from the earth, and wine to gladden the human heart, oil to make the face shine and bread to strengthen the human heart. Psalm 104:14-15

**Fact:** Food in the U.S. travels an average of 1,300 miles to supermarkets. This long distance transportation of food consumes large amounts of fossil fuels and the power used for refrigeration further contributes to our climate crisis. Almost every state in the U.S. buys 85% of its food from other states.. The current trend towards large corporate farms that produce ‘mono-crops’ is destroying not only the environment but also the family farm and the local economy in rural areas.

#### **Commitment:**

*Immediate-* Find your local farmer’s market. Buy fruits, vegetables and breads from local producers to support your local economy. To find a market near you, go to <https://www.massfarmersmarkets.org/>. To find a local food cooperative use the US Food Co-op directory <https://www.grocer.coop/coops>

*Long term-* Join a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), by buying a share in a local farm, you are able to get a weekly supply of seasonal vegetables, support the long term sustainability of a local farmer and perhaps even get a chance to dig in the dirt yourself! CSA information can be found online at:

<https://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/community-supported-agriculture>

Cedar Rock Gardens, Gloucester <https://cedarrokgardens.com/>

Sea View Farm, Rockport <https://seaviewfarmrockport.com/>

Tender Crop Farm, Newburyport <http://www.tendercropfarm.com/>

Iron Ox Farm in Topsfield <https://ironoxfarming.com/>

North of Boston Farm: <https://northofboston.farm/>

Farmer Dave's <https://farmerdaves.net/>

Local Grass Fed Beef <https://www.bigpicturebeef.com/>

### **Family Activity:**

Watch The Biggest Little Farm on Amazon

<https://www.amazon.com/Biggest-Little-Farm-John-Chester/dp/B07R4CFF3M>

Learn how to calculate your food miles. <https://www.foodmiles.com/>

Start a small vegetable garden inside from seed and then after frost transplant.

### **Prayer: by Edward Hayes**

Earth maker and Lord of all creation, we are mindful that this food before us has already been blessed by the sun, earth and rain.

We pause to be grateful for the hidden gifts of life in this food.

Bless our eyes and taste so that we may eat this food in a holy and mindful manner.

We lift up this bread; may it be food and symbol for all of us who shall eat it. Amen.

## **7. Cleaning Products**

**Daily Scripture:** When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. When you send forth your spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the ground. Psalm 104:29-30

### **Facts:**

Many cleaners are based on chemicals that are harmful to consume—for humans, animals, and plants. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) categorizes many of these chemicals as “volatile organic compounds.” They include phosphorous (which constitutes about 30 to 40 percent of dishwasher detergents), nitrogen, and ammonia.

When you use these chemicals, they are eventually rinsed down the drain. The water then heads to wastewater treatment facilities, where the majority of contaminants are removed before the water makes its way back to rivers and lakes. However, not all the contaminants are removed, and over time, they can build up to have a substantial, negative effect on wildlife. Some compounds actually accelerate plant growth, leading to dense vegetation that interferes with animal life and eventually decays in equally massive quantities. Alkylphenol ethoxylates, common in cleaners, function as an "endocrine disrupter," causing adverse reproductive effects of the types seen in wildlife exposed to polluted waters.

**Commitment:**

*Immediate-* Make your own multi-purpose cleaning solution: Mix 2 Tbsp baking soda with 1 pint warm water. Add into a spray bottle with a splash of vinegar to cut grease.

*Long term-* Purchase earth and people-friendly cleaning products. Choose less hazardous products that have positive attributes, e.g., biodegradability, low toxicity, low volatile organic compound (VOC) content, reduced packaging, low life cycle energy use. Advocate for its use in schools and other public space. Look online at Seventh Generation <http://www.seventhgeneration.com>. Earth Friendly Products <http://www.ecos.com> Explore locally based Essex Soap refill <https://form.jotform.com/201805721820144>

**Family Activity:** Go around the house and collect all cleaning solutions you can find. Read the labels and understand the precautions and hazards to humans and the environment. Talk about these as a family and why you have them. Make a family plan to commit to replace them.

**Daily Prayer: by Rev. Peter Lippiett**

We thank you, Creator God,  
for the goodly heritage you offer us, from green downland to the deep salt seas,  
and for the abundant world we share with your creation.  
Keep us so mindful of its needs and those of all with whom we share,  
that open to your Spirit we may discern and practice all that makes for its well-being,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**To Learn More:**

<https://www.epa.gov/greenerproducts/greening-your-purchase-cleaning-products-guide-federal-purchasers>

## 8. Water supply

**Daily Scripture:** “The Earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the world and all who dwell therein. Yahweh founded it on the deep waters, laying its foundations in the ocean depths.”  
Psalm 24:1-2

### **Fact: How are we protecting the water supply?**

Increasing droughts due to our climate crisis are beginning to limit the amount of freshwater available in the United States. However as individuals, our single greatest daily use of potable water is disposing of our waste in toilets, the second is clothes washers. Oregon allows the use of rainwater in a second plumbing system to flush toilets. In Mass. this can only be done in houses with composting toilets.

Urban stormwater runoff is a serious problem, overloading sewage treatment plants including waterways. Now, various US cities are creating innovative green infrastructure - such as rain gardens and roadside plantings - that mimics the way nature collects and cleanses water

[https://e360.yale.edu/features/to\\_tackle\\_runoff\\_cities\\_turn\\_to\\_green\\_initiatives](https://e360.yale.edu/features/to_tackle_runoff_cities_turn_to_green_initiatives)

Nitrogen is an essential nutrient for plants and animals, but too much nitrogen—often from fertilizer runoff and septic tanks—boosts the growth of algae, which overwhelm water bodies and ultimately reduce oxygen levels in them. Oysters, clams, and other shellfish are efficient filter feeders that help remove excess nitrogen from waters by incorporating it into their shells and tissue as they grow. Adult oysters can filter up to 50 gallons a day, while large quahogs (hard clams) can clean about 24 gallons of water a day.

### **Commitment:**

*Immediate*-Use less water. A dishwasher uses half as much water as hand washing dishes. Wash only full loads of clothes and dishes. Use drip irrigation hoses in gardens.

*Long Term*- Check for leaks by stopping water usage and recording the water meter level before and after. Repair leaks immediately. A single dripping faucet can drip 2,777 gallons of water per year.

Contact your selectmen and mayor's office about seeding oysters in your local harbor. A mature oyster can clean 50 gallons of water a day.

Attend the GroundWater Summit, a virtual conference December 8-10, 2020

<https://groundwatersummit.com/>

### **Family Activity:**

Fill a glass bowl or aquarium with local harbor water, purchase some fresh oysters from the market, put them in the water and watch.

### **Prayer: Stephen Sundborg, SJ**

Loving God, we thank you for the gift of water. No wonder you are known as the fountain of life and your spirit in us spoken of as a living stream. No wonder we are said to thirst for life, for love, for goodness, and for the sacred. No wonder we speak of you as our source. So we thank you for the gift of water. We pray for water for those who lack it. We ask for rain for our forests and farms and land. We seek to assure on our

planet water for all people to drink and from which to live. As we treasure this one gift from you we ask that we might live more gratefully day by day for all of your gifts so abundantly poured out for us and for all our sisters and brothers. Amen.

### **9. Forests**

**Daily Scripture:** Then God said, 'Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.' And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day. (Genesis 1:11-12)

**Facts:** Forests are the best nature-based solution to climate change. Annually in the United States, forests and forest products capture and store almost 15 percent of the country's carbon emissions from burning fossil fuels. They have the potential to capture nearly twice as much if we plant more trees, use climate-smart practices to manage our forests and take other actions. Trees in metropolitan areas and small towns in the U.S. are responsible for almost one-fifth of the country's captured and stored carbon emissions. They also shade buildings in the summer and block wind in the winter, which reduces the use of air conditioners and heaters—avoiding millions of tons of carbon emissions.

Trees are vital to the health and wealth of people.

- Trees across the U.S. absorb 17.4 million tons of air pollutants, preventing 670,000 cases of asthma and other acute respiratory symptoms annually.
- Nationwide, trees prevent approximately 1,200 heat-related deaths and countless

heat-related illnesses annually. This is significant, given that a 10-fold increase in heat-related deaths is expected in the Eastern U.S. by 2050.

- In the U.S., trees reduce energy use for heating and cooling by 7.2%, on average.
- Trees are a source of income—such as jobs related to tree maintenance and making products out of reclaimed wood. For every \$1 million invested in forest restoration, 39.7 forest-related jobs are created in rural U.S. areas alone.

Over the last twenty years alone, 300 million hectares of forests have been cleared. Currently we have only half of the forests that existed when agriculture began 11,000 years ago!

**Commitment:**

*Immediate-* When purchasing paper products for your home this week, make sure to purchase products that are labeled recycled, and made of post-consumer waste. Shop around, there are many possibilities!

*Long Term-* Explore implementing “paper guidelines” in your home or office. Join organizations like [The Arbor Day Foundation](#) or sponsor tree planting through [greeninghaiti.org](#) created by Annisquam’s Sarah Hackett.

**Family Activities:** Take a walk in the woods. How many kinds of trees do you see? Use baskets of acorns as toys to play with. Find out what animals live in the woods, what birds. How do they make their homes? Energy flows where attention goes - research fun facts about the woods and teach your children to love the woods throughout their lives. Learn about the fungi that live off fallen trees and leaves. Watch the [movie “Fantastic Fungi.”](#)

**Daily Prayer: Satish Kumar**

Sometimes I came across a tree which seemed like a Buddha or a Jesus:  
 loving, compassionate, still, unambitious, enlightened, in eternal meditation -  
 giving pleasure to a pilgrim, shade to a cow, berries to a bird,  
 beauty to its surroundings, health to its neighbors, branches for the fire,  
 leaves for the soil, asking nothing in return, in total harmony with the wind and the rain.  
 How much can I learn from a tree?  
 The tree is my church, the tree is my temple, the tree is my mantra,  
 The tree is my poem and my prayer.

**And: From the Chinook (Native American) Psalter**

How lovely are thy holy groves  
 God of heaven and earth  
 My soul longs and faints for the circle of thy trees

My heart and flesh sing with joy to thee  
O God of life. Amen.

## 10. Public Policy and Advocacy (National)

### Daily Scripture:

“You have been told, O mortal, what is good, and what the Lord requires of you: Do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God.” - Micah 6.8

### Fact:

The Trump administration has dismantled major climate and environmental policies. Calling the rules unnecessary and burdensome to the fossil fuel industry and other businesses, the administration has weakened Obama-era limits on planet-warming carbon dioxide emissions [from power plants](#) and from [cars and trucks](#), and rolled back many more rules governing clean air, water and toxic chemicals.

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/climate/trump-environment-rollbacks.html>

### Commitment:

*Immediate* - Be a FaithClimateJusticeVoter: <https://www.faithclimatejusticevoter.org/>

*Long term* - Join an organization devoted to policy change to benefit the environment:

The Sierra Club: <https://www.sierraclub.org/>

**Family Activity:** #FridaysForFuture is a movement that began in August 2018, after teenager Greta Thunberg and other young activists sat in front of the Swedish parliament every school day for three weeks, to protest against the lack of action on the climate crisis. Learn more and join [them](#).

### Daily Prayer: From the United Church of Christ

Holy God, we are thankful for the ways in which our political system allows the voices of many people to be heard. Grant us, Lord God, a vision of your world as your love would have it: a world where the weak are protected, and none go hungry or poor;  
a world where the riches of creation are shared, and everyone can enjoy them;  
a world where different races and cultures live in harmony and mutual respect;  
a world where peace is built with justice, and justice is guided by love.

Give us the inspiration and courage to build it, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

## 11. Eat Lower on the Food Chain

**Daily Scripture:** The Lord said to Moses, “I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day.” Exodus 16:4

**Facts:** There are health benefits as well as environmental benefits when we eat lower on the food chain, including reducing heart disease, limiting cancer risks, and improving your diet. In terms of environmental benefits, producing fruits and vegetables requires less energy and water than most meat. The United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that the meat industry generates a fifth of man-made greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere. At the same time, water usage can be reduced because livestock requires a greater amount of water than vegetables or grains. Cattle consume 70% of all U.S. grain. It takes 1,799 gallons of water to produce a pound beef. Most of the beef consumed in the U.S. comes from feedlots, where cattle are fed a diet mainly of corn which wreaks havoc with their digestive system which is designed for grass not grain. So they are fed daily rations of antibiotics. Animal feedlots are a source of pathogens and chemical contamination for water supplies. For more info:

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/foodfeatures/meat/>

**Commitment:**

*Immediate-* Replace a portion of meat in your diet with either a vegetarian meal for one day a week, or eat lower on the food chain throughout the week (limiting or fully excluding foods from animals- meat, dairy and eggs)

*Long-term-* Become vegan, in eating and lifestyle! Work to limit the power and influence of large scale factory farms. Educate yourself on the mass production of meats in this country Support local farmers and legislation that supports them. For further information look at <http://www.farmaid.org>

**Family activity** - Choose and make together a vegetarian recipe for dinner

**Daily Prayer: From the Zen Buddhist Tradition**

First, let us reflect on our own work

and the effort of those who brought us this food.

Secondly, let us be aware of the quality of our deeds  
as we receive this meal.

Thirdly, what is most essential is the practice of mindfulness  
which helps us transcend greed, anger and delusion.

Fourthly, we appreciate this food

which sustains the good health of our body and mind.

Fifthly, in order to continue our practice for all beings  
we accept this offering.

**To Learn More:** [EWG's Good Food on a Tight Budget](#)

## 12. Indoor Plants

### Daily Scripture:

Then God said, 'Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.' And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day. Genesis 1:11-13

**Fact:** Indoor plants help reduce 'sick building syndrome'. Research has been conducted by NASA into the presence of unhealthy Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) in offices. Carpets, upholstery, copier machines and cleaning products emit VOCs. NASA's research recommends that the inclusion of indoor plants in the office environment would reduce substantially the amount of VOCs that employees are daily exposed to. The direct benefits of indoor plants to the air we breath are twofold: Pollutants are filtered from indoor air; and oxygen is released while humidity levels are reduced.

### Commitment:

*Immediate-* Bring into your home or office a small plant to add to your table or bookshelf.

*Long-term-* Add more and more plants to your home and workplace. Consider planting an indoor herb garden. Share your plants with family and friends. Learn the species of your plants, their origin and their medicinal benefits! Consider purchasing a live, potted Christmas tree that you can plant in your yard. If you're considering an outdoor garden next season, it's ideal to get a head start by starting seeds indoors then replanting the young plants outdoors when the growing season begins.

*Family Activity:* Teach your children to create a new plant from a plant cutting or seeds. Some examples include Spider plants and philodendron that root easily. Plant a potato, a sweet potato, carrot or avocado. Take pictures and chart their growth (i.e. height, number of leaves, etc). Pot them.

### Daily Prayer:

*A whiff of forest scent,  
Balsam and fern,  
Won from dreary mood  
My heart's return,  
From its discontent*

### Creed of the Wood - Katharine Lee Bates

*Joy's run-away  
To the sweet, wise wood  
And the laughing day*

*Simple as dew and gleam  
Is the creed of the wood!  
The Beautiful gave us life,  
And life is good.  
Be the world but a dream,  
Let the world go shod  
With peace, not strife,  
For the Dreamer is God.*

**To Learn More:** <http://www.zone10.com/tech/NASA/Fyh.htm>

*"Real change, enduring change, happens one step at a time."*

*Ruth Bader Ginsberg*

### **13. Food Waste**

**Daily Scripture:** "Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the good will of all the people." (Acts 2.43-47).

**Fact:** Why should we pay attention to food waste?

The U.S. is the global leader in food waste, discarding 40 million tons of food per year, or \$161 billion on food waste. That's 219 pounds of waste per person, and 30-40% of the US food supply. Most of this food goes to landfills, making up 22% of municipal solid waste. This waste generates 7% of the world's emissions, which contributes to global warming. Food spoilage, real or perceived, is one of the biggest reasons people throw out food--more than 80% of Americans throw out good food because they misunderstand expiration labels. <https://www.rts.com/resources/guides/food-waste-america/>

**Commitment:**

*Immediate-* Learn about expiration labels. Plan meals to avoid overbuying and impulse buying. Make eating intentional and prayerful instead of fast and disembodied. Enjoy your food! Utilize leftovers. Serve appropriate portions and avoid overloading plates. Learn about composting or join a composting program, like [blackearthcompost.com](http://blackearthcompost.com)

*Long term-* Watch Sharon Byrne Kishida's 1.5 hour [webinar](#) "Waste Reduction and Why it Matters." Sharon is our Massachusetts Dept. of Environmental Protection Municipal Assistance Coordinator. Enjoy sustainable community meals with others. (A great cookbook is "More with Less: Whole Food Cookery Made Irresistibly Simple" by Jodi Moreno).

**Family Activity:** Have an ugly food taste test, presenting your children with a "normal vegetable and an "ugly" one, i.e. a straight vs. deformed carrot. Have them taste each one, and discuss the similarities and differences. Then use them in a recipe.

**Daily Prayer: From Buddhist Teacher Thich Nhat Han**

May the food we are eating makes us aware of the interconnections between the Universe and us, Earth and us, and all other living species and us. Because each bite contains in itself the life of Sun and Earth. May we see the meaning and value of life from these precious morsels of food.

**14. Public Advocacy and Policy (State & local)**

**Daily Scripture:** "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."  
-Matthew 5.9

**Facts:** Public policy has an out-sized impact on land conservation, ecosystem restoration, historic preservation, and sustainable agriculture. Sound legislation helps protect precious places, rehabilitate important landscapes and manage the looming impacts of climate change. At the same time, there are examples of misguided policies around conservation, recreation, and nature that have produced devastating setbacks. Here are examples of what is happening in our local area:

According to the recent "[State of the Coast Report](#)" by the Trustees of Reservations: While most of Gloucester has a relatively high granite coast, beach erosion is likely to continue to significantly threaten oceanfront homes and neighborhoods, with as much as 1.4 feet per year lost at Good Harbor Beach.

Marsh loss: About 394 (41%) of 950 acres in Gloucester may be mostly flooded by 2050.

Habitat concerns: By 2050, 225 acres (26%) of the city's 856 acres of estuarine beach/tidal flats could become open water.

Developed coast: Ten-year storm flooding of homes and buildings is likely in 2050 on sections of Wingaersheek Road, River Road (Lobster Cove), areas near Route 127 (Goose Cove), areas near the river on Wheeler Point, and areas near marshes off of Route 127. Daily tidal flooding possible in some sections.

**Commitment:**

*Immediate-* Vote <https://www.vote.org/>  
<https://gloucester-ma.gov/337/Elections>  
<https://www.rockportma.gov/registrars-voters>

*Long-term-* Get to know our [Rep. Ferrante's](#) and [Sen. Tarr's](#) positions on local environmental concerns. Learn about environmental priorities from the [Environmental League of Massachusetts](#). Join [Trustees of the Reservations](#) and/or [Mass Audubon](#).

**Family Activity:** Talk with your family about climate change. What are they most concerned about? Then, write a letter together expressing your concerns to a local policymaker.

**Daily Prayer: A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life by Shantideva (Buddhism)**

May I be protector for those without one, a guide for all travellers on the way;  
 May I be a bridge, a boat and a ship for all who wish to cross (the water).

May I be an island for those who seek one and a lamp for those desiring light,  
 May I be a bed for all who wish to rest and a servant for all who want a servant.

May I be a wishing jewel, a magic vase, powerful mantras and great medicine,  
 May I become a wish-fulfilling tree and a cow of plenty for the world.

Just like space and the great elements such as earth,  
 May I always support the life of all the boundless creatures.

And until they pass away from pain, may I also be the source of life  
 For all the realms of varied beings that reach unto the ends of space.

**15. Heat**

**Daily Scripture:** "Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also rests secure." - Psalm 16. 9

**Fact:**

Almost half of the energy we use in our homes goes to heating and cooling. Cranking up the thermostat costs you and the planet: heating a room by an extra degree for a year releases 310-360kg of extra CO2 into the atmosphere. Using fossil fuel for heating increases global warming, the risk of oil spills, air pollution, and acid rain. By adjusting your thermostat 2 degrees (lower in winter, higher in summer) you can lower energy bills 4% annually and could save about 2000 pounds of CO2 a year with this simple adjustment.

**Commitment:**

*Immediate-* Lower your heat a few degrees to save energy. Wear a sweater and grab a blanket to save even more. Keep heat at the lowest safe setting to prevent broken water pipes during least active times.

*Long term-* Check out where you are leaking energy with an energy audit from [Mass Save](#). Insulate doors and windows, or replace with energy efficient windows. Close off parts of your house during winter that you are not using. If you are building a new home, make energy efficiency a design priority. Become informed on alternative heating methods for your home: geothermal, radiant heat, oil filled electric baseboards, natural gas hydronic baseboards. Check your city and state websites for solar rebates.

**Family Activity:** Teach your child about the nature of the sun. Place cookie cutters on a baking sheet. Cut old crayons into small bits, pour the pieces into the cookie cutters, and let them melt in the sun. Then place them in the shade or in the fridge to cool. You'll have beautiful new crayons in lovely shapes, and your child will learn a new respect for the transformative heat of the sun. Explore this [website](#) to help children learn how to use and save energy.

**Daily Prayer: Traditional Scotch/Irish blessing**

May the blessing of light be on you-

Light without and light within.

May the blessed sunlight shine on you like a great peat fire,

So that stranger and friend may come and warm himself at it.

And may light shine out of the two eyes of you,

Like a candle set in the window of a house,

Bidding the wanderer come in out of the storm.

And now may the Lord bless you, and bless you kindly. Amen.

**16. Hunger**

**Daily Scripture:** Jesus preached, "For I was hungry and you gave me food...As you did it to

one of the least of these you did it to me” Matthew 25:35, 40

**Facts:** What is hunger? Malnutrition is when people have an inadequate intake of protein, energy and micronutrients. Food insecurity is not knowing where your next meal will come from.

According to the [World Economic Forum](#) “the number of undernourished people in the world began to rise in 2015 and “nearly 2/3 of all undernourished people live in countries with high exposure to climate extremes.”

In June, 2020 17.3% of households in Massachusetts saw an increase in food insecurity, up from 9.3% during the same month in 2018...At the same time, our traditional charitable fixes - food pantries and food banks – are already stretched thin and cannot meet the scale of what we are facing” (Boston Globe, 31 July 2020)

**Commitment:**

*Immediate-* When preparing, ordering and buying food, serve and take only what you and your household can eat. Try not to throw anything away. Consider donating food to [The Open Door](#).

*Long-term-* Educate yourself about the multiple ways that hunger is impacted by environmental degradation, unequal distribution of resources, war, foreign debt and your own dietary choices. Learn from the 2020 Nobel Peace prize winner, the [World Food Program](#). Donate a portion of your own food budget to support world hunger organizations. Host a monthly hunger meal by eating a sparse and simple meal and donating the money to a hunger organization.

*Family Activity:* Photographer Peter Menzel took photos of 36 families in 24 countries; each family is shown with the food that they eat in one week. All of the photos & information can also be found [here](#). Menzel’s photographs and information are in [What the World Eats](#).

Select a country with food security issues, and plan a typical meal of the poorest people, possibly rice or porridge, to help establish an appreciation for the challenges the less fortunate face in feeding themselves.

**Daily Prayer: From the National Catholic Rural Life Conference**

Let us pray for the poor, hungry, and neglected all over the world, that their cries for daily bread may inspire works of compassion and mercy among those to whom much has been given.

Let us pray for the farmers with limited or marginal land throughout the world, for those who lack access to water and other resources, and for the light of research and support services to shine in the lives of all God's people.

Let us pray for the health of women, children, and families around the world, especially for an end to maternal and child mortality, that in building healthy families, all God's people may be empowered to strengthen their communities and repair the breaches which divide nations and peoples.

Let us pray for an end to the waste and desecration of God's creation, for access to the fruits of creation to be shared equally among all people, and for communities and nations to find sustenance in the fruits of the earth and the water God has given us. Lord, hear our prayer.

### **17. Water heaters**

**Daily Scripture:** As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease. *Genesis 8:22*

**Facts:** According to the US Department of Energy, the standard residential water heater is the highest energy consuming appliance in your home, behind heating and air conditioning. And a tank style water heater that is more than 8 years old uses more energy than the refrigerator, dishwasher, washing machine and dryer combined.

Just by using the "off the shelf" energy-efficient technologies available today, we could cut the cost of heating, cooling, and lighting our homes and workplaces by up to 80%.

### **Commitment:**

*Immediate-* Be judicious in your use of water. Fill the sink with warm water to wash your dishes, rather than let the water run over each dish as you wash it. Become aware of how much hot water you use when cold water would do.

Check out the water heater in your home. Set your water heater to 120° F, which will produce plenty of hot water and still save energy. Wrap your water heater with a water heater blanket, especially if it's in an unheated area of your home. Using the blanket alone could save you up to 10 percent on water heating costs. (Some newer models are so well insulated that you don't need to wrap them. Check first to see if adding an insulating blanket to your water heater will affect the warranty.) Conserve hot water by installing

water-saving showerheads.

*Long term* - Use high-efficiency water heaters. In this area one can also purchase what are called “instantaneous” or “tankless” water heaters—and they can reduce energy consumption up to 20%. Even better, install a solar water heater to reduce energy use and cut down on pollution.

**Family Activity:** Children of a certain age can be taught about the sources of energy we use to heat water. And they can be taught to be wise about the use of energy in heating our water, and the use of water itself. Teach your children to use hot water sparingly. Siblings can have a family competition to see how little water they can use in a day. Keep a chart. Offer a prize. You can educate your children early about the reasons we should conserve water and use it mindfully.

**Daily Prayer: from Psalm 40, rendered by Stephen Mitchell**

"Hold us in your embrace, Lord:  
make us transparent in your light.  
Grant us awareness; keep our gratitude fresh each day.  
Let our song give blessing and insight  
to those who can't see for themselves.  
And let your compassion always shine forth  
from the depths of our hearts."

**To learn more:** Find out about solar water heaters that don't emit CO2 into the environment. Go to [goclean.masscec.com](http://goclean.masscec.com)

## 18. Junkmail

**Daily Scripture:** Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before the LORD; at the presence of YHWH, for God is coming. God will rule the earth with justice, and the peoples with truth. -Psalm 96:12-13

**Facts:** Junk mail is one of the leading contributors to our over consumption of paper. According to the Data and Marketing Association, direct mail marketing in the US is a \$10 billion industry, resulting in 85+ billion pieces of junk mail per year. Almost half of this junk mail ends up UNOPENED in landfills. Cutting down trees to make paper has an especially intense environmental impact since short-lived paper products have a higher carbon footprint than long-lasting wood products such as hardwood floors and furniture.

**Commitment:**

*Immediate-* Remove yourself from unwanted junk mail lists! Visit

<http://www.dmachoice.org> to fill out a simple form that can be mailed in to take you off general junk mail lists. Encourage friends and neighbors to similarly remove themselves from these lists.

*Long Term-* Join a political action campaign to call companies to reduce the amount of unnecessary paper sent to consumers. Visit [One Tree Planted](#) and join the movement for reforestation!

**Family Activity:** Use that junk mail to create a collage or play Post Office with your children and grandchildren.

**Daily Prayer: The Beauty of the Trees** by Chief Dan George TsleilWaututh

The beauty of the trees, the softness of the air, the fragrance of the grass, speaks to me.  
The summit of the mountain, the thunder of the sky, the rhythm of the sea, speaks to me.  
The strength of the fire, the trail of the sun,  
And the life that never goes away, they speak to me.  
And my heart soars with gratitude.

**19. Renewable Resources: Wind Power**

**Scripture:** God understands the way to it, and God knows its place. For God looks to the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens. When God gave to the wind its power, and apportioned out the waters by measure; when God made a decree for the rain, and a way for the thunderbolt; then God saw it and declared it; God established it, and searched it out. - *Job 28:23-27*

**Facts**

The United States' wind power capacity was 105.591 megawatts at the end of 2019, making it the largest renewable energy source in the United States. That's enough electricity to offset the consumption of 29.5 million average American homes.

To keep the possibility of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees in sight per the Paris Agreement, global greenhouse gas emissions need to drop by 55% by 2030, according to the UN. Right now, total emissions are around 53.5 gigatons per year of equivalent carbon dioxide.

One (1) MW (1,000 KW) of power from a coal and / or gas fired power plant produces about 800 tons of CO2 per year. Conversely, 1 MW from wind can reduce the CO2 emissions by the same amount.

Human civilizations have harnessed [wind power for thousands of years](#). Early forms of windmills used wind to crush grain or pump water. Now, modern wind turbines use the

wind to create electricity.

Wind turbines are big. Wind turbine blades average over 190 feet long, and turbine towers average 295 feet tall—about the height of the Statue of Liberty.

Massachusetts Wind Turbine Projects:

On Cape Ann, there are three 2.5 MW wind turbines visible from Blackburn Circle. One of these is owned by Varian (Applied Materials). Two are owned by the City of Gloucester and provide power to City building and schools.

**Commitment:**

*Immediate-* National Grid allows you to request that your energy come from renewable resources. Find out more [here](#).

*Long term-* Get involved in community, State and Federal efforts to promote wind as a renewable resource. At the local level, write or call the [Cape Ann Climate Coalition](#) (CACC) or the [Gloucester Clean Energy Commission](#) (CEC). At the state or federal level, write or call your congressman's office to find out how to get involved.

**Family Activity:**

Visit the three wind turbines near the Blackburn Circle. Stand underneath and marvel at their height and size...and listen.

**Daily Prayer: Christine Valters Painter**

This  
breathing  
in is a miracle,  
this breathing out, release,  
this breathing in a welcome to  
the unseen gifts which sustain me each  
moment, this breathing out a sweet sigh,  
a bow to my mortality, this breathing in  
a holy yes to life, this breathing out  
a sacred no to all that causes  
me to clench and gasp,  
this breathing in is a  
revelation, this  
breathing out,  
freedom.

**Learn More**

Explore more wind facts in [Top 10 Things You Didn't Know About Offshore Wind Energy](#).

**20. Appliances**

**Daily Scripture:**

Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and

may go through the gates into the city. *Revelation 22:14*

**Facts:** Appliances account for about 20 percent of a typical household's energy use, with refrigerators, dishwashers, clothes washers and dryers at the top of the list. A load of dishes cleaned in a dishwasher requires 37 percent less water than washing dishes by hand. But if you fill the wash and rinse basins instead of letting the water run, you'll use half as much water. The average washing machine uses 40 gallons of water per load!

**Commitment:**

*Immediate-* Wash dishes by hand or use the energy efficiency setting on the dishwasher. For clothes, on warm sunny days don't use the dryer, hang them on a line outside. Up to 90 percent of the cost of washing clothes comes from heating the water, so use hot water only for very dirty clothes, and always use cold water in the rinse cycle. Consider using a high efficiency washer, or combining laundry loads to use the washer less. Make a commitment to reduce the amount you use your washer! A dirty lint screen can cause your dryer to use up to 30 percent more energy. Keep your freezer and refrigerator full - it helps keep the temperature down.

*Long-term-* Purchase energy efficient appliances. If looking for new household products, look for ones that have earned the ENERGY STAR. They meet strict energy efficiency guidelines set by the EPA and US Department of Energy. Look online at their website - it has calculators and tools for estimating savings as well as invaluable advice. [http:// www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov) There are unique washing machines that empty waste water (gray water) back out into the garden. If you do this you will need to use biodegradable soap, a good choice for any kind of laundry.

**Family Activity:** There are many cartoons online to teach children about appliances and what they do. Watch them together. Teach your children about the appliances in your home: show them how to use the dishwasher, the clothes washer, the refrigerator. Teach them how they work: Have a child stand straight with their arms straight down and away from their body. Ask them to twist very fast and see how long it takes before they get tired. It takes a lot of energy for the washing machine to do its job! Teach them to appreciate these labor-saving devices. Help them understand that there are ways to conserve energy by the way they use appliances - like washing with cold water, or consolidating loads of laundry. Teach them in what ways appliances hurt the environment (i.e. refrigeration). Give them jobs like hanging out laundry to dry in the sun.

**Daily Prayer: An Affirmative Prayer from New Thought Tradition**

As residents of Earth, we care for its components—the air, the soil, the water.

We respect our plant life—the rooted, the floating, the climbing.  
 We wisely use abundant gifts—yields of crops and vegetation, products of minerals.  
 We give thanks for present and future resources of Earth  
 As they are discovered, maintained, and utilized with care.  
 We bless this precious place, for it is also the home of generations to come.  
 We are good to Earth, our home, and Earth blesses us with good. And so it is.

**To Learn More:**

[www.eia.doe.gov/kids/energyfacts/saving/efficiency/savingenergy.html](http://www.eia.doe.gov/kids/energyfacts/saving/efficiency/savingenergy.html)

**21. Lawn & Gardens**

**Daily Scripture:** *“It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds perched in its branches.” - Luke 13:19*

**Facts:** Non-point source pollution is the most widespread water quality problem facing our country. The chemicals that are put on lawns and gardens end up in coastal waters, streams and drinking water supplies. These chemicals can damage our health, impact wildlife and affect healthy soils. A simple solution is to stop using chemicals. [The Great Healthy Yard Project](#), a partner of the Garden Clubs of America, offers guidance on organic lawn care.

The insecticide diazinon, used in homes and on lawns and gardens, is one of the most frequently found pesticides in air, rain and fog. In one study, researchers estimated that after 2,4-D lawn application, indoor exposure levels for young children were ten times greater than before the applications—and that exposure levels from contact with exposed floors and tabletops were up to 30 times greater than dietary exposure levels.

**Commitment:**

*Immediate-* If you must have grass, water less and only in the early morning or late afternoon to save water. Refuse to use chemical pesticides.

*Long-term-* Learn about [eco-landscaping](#), using native plants in your garden. Depending on where you are in the country, maybe a rock garden with some cactus would be better, or a lawn of prairie grasses.

Visit the The Healthy Yard Project [website](#) and consider taking their pledge to “take care of my yard without synthetic pesticides, weedkillers and fertilizers except on rare occasions to resolve an infestation or to improve habitat for native plants and wildlife and to pledge not to throw pharmaceuticals or chemicals down my drains or toilet”.

*Family Activity:* Have your children make a drawing of your lawn and gardens. Then have

them make a drawing of what might be growing on the same patch of ground if it wasn't planted with grass. Compare them. How different those drawings look! Explore native plants to include in your yard. Ask them what wildlife may be attracted by the native plants. Some great examples: Milkweed to attract and feed Monarch Butterflies; American Holly to attract Orioles; American Larch to attract woodpeckers, etc How many animals would find homes? How many birds would be building nests and singing? Ask your children what new trees, flowers and bushes they'd like to plant. Have them draw the new garden. It's wonderful for them to realize that they can restore habitat that is critically important now.

**Daily Prayer:** by e.e. cummings

i thank You God for most this amazing  
day: for the 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 who have died am alive again today,  
and this is the sun's birthday; this is the birth  
day of life and love and wings: and of the gay  
great happening illimitably earth)

how should tasting touching hearing seeing  
breathing any--lifted from the no  
of all nothing--human merely being  
doubt unimaginable You?

(now the ears of my ears awake and  
now the eyes of my eyes are opened)

**Learn More:**[Butterfly Gardens](#) and [Native Plants](#)

**22. Work for Peace (and to End War)**

**Daily Scripture:**

*Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you. Not as the world gives do I give to you.  
Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. John 14:27*

**Facts:** War is bad for the environment. According to Brown University's Costs of War project: The U.S. Department of Defense has a larger annual carbon footprint than most

countries on earth. Since the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, the U.S. military is estimated to have emitted a staggering 1.2 billion tons of carbon into the atmosphere. (The entire annual carbon emissions of the United Kingdom is roughly 360 million tons).

The war in Iraq led to a huge spike in carbon dioxide emissions, the widespread poisoning of the Iraqi environment, and elevated rates of cancer, and crippling birth defects. U.S. military operations have caused the people of Fallujah to suffer “the highest rate of genetic damage in any population ever studied.” Military operations also pollute at home. The U.S. military is the third largest polluter of U.S. waterways. Finally, American nuclear weapons are so devastating, they could spell the end of life as we know it.

### **Commitment:**

*Immediate*- Be a peacekeeper in your daily living. Use the Golden Rule as a referent. Don't harbor grudges, let them go. As a Buddhist saint said about relating with others, write the harsh times on water and the sweet times on stone.

*Long term*- Speak up. Research the environmental impact of war, and write to your senators and congresspeople to protest the U.S. military's profligate use of oil and toxic substances worldwide and its polluting of water here at home.

Join organizations that work for peace like [The Fellowship of Reconciliation](#), an interfaith organization devoted to non-violence.

*Family Activity* -Go to: [www.seedsofpeace.org/wp-content](http://www.seedsofpeace.org/wp-content) to find wonderful peace games for children for school and home. Look up Buckminster Fuller's World Game, the purpose of which is to make the world work for 100% of humanity, in the shortest possible time, through spontaneous cooperation, without ecological offense or the disadvantage of anyone. Google “Cooperative Games for Children.”

### **Prayer: - An excerpt from "Desiderata" by Max Ehrmann**

Beyond a wholesome discipline; be gentle with yourself.

You are a child of the universe no less than the trees and the stars;

You have a right to be here.

And whether or not it is clear to you,

No doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.

Therefore, be at peace with God, whatever you conceive God to be.

And whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life,

Keep peace in your soul.

With all its sham, drudgery, and broken dreams,  
It is still a beautiful world.  
Be cheerful. Strive to be happy.

**To Learn More:** [Brown University Costs of War Project](#) and [Worldbeyondwar.org](#).  
Read *The Three Trillion Dollar War* by Linda Bilmes, professor at the Kennedy School.  
Watch Charles Ferguson's award winning documentary "No End In Sight."

### 23. Public Transportation

**Daily Scripture:** "Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others." - Philippians 2.4

**Facts:** Massachusetts traffic congestion is the worst in the nation. In the US, 45% of the citizens do not have access to any form of public transportation. Public transportation can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by:

- Providing a low emissions alternative to driving.
- Facilitating compact land use, reducing the need to travel long distances.
- Minimizing the carbon footprint of transit operations and construction.

#### **Commitment:**

*Immediate-* Take the bus, train or other public transportation as you travel. Walk, ride a bike or take the [CATA bus](#) whenever possible. When in Boston, take the MBTA ([www.mbta.com](http://www.mbta.com) for bus and train schedules).

*Long term-* Join [Transportation for Massachusetts](#), an organization dedicated to improving transportation in our state or [LivableStreets](#), an organization dedicated to people centered transportation systems around Metro Boston.

**Family Activity** - Learn about biking and public transit options for your travel to/from work and school. Read about them together. Try slowing down and set a month to "experiment". In that month, bike as a family and/ or take public transportation with your family. Understand the route and round-trip time to/from school or work. Understand what you can do with that time not rushing in your car.

#### **Daily Prayer: By John Birch**

O God, in our moments of doubt and unbelief,  
When worldly pressure or circumstance  
Become the distance between us,  
Draw near, we pray.

Remind us of the grace that we first knew,  
 Your healing touch, The Creator's love, The Spirit's breath.  
 Grant us courage, A faith that endures and the sure knowledge  
 That you are with us in our journeying, now and always.

## 24. Batteries

**Daily Scripture:** When you hide your face, they are dismayed; When you take away their breath they die, and return to their dust. When you send forth your spirit they are created; and you renew the face of the earth. -*Psalm 104.29-30*

**Facts:** From our cell phones, laptops and other electronic devices to children's toys and cars, modern life runs on batteries. These batteries can seriously damage the environment—and human health—if not disposed of properly.

Chemicals inside a battery can include cadmium, lead, mercury, nickel, lithium and electrolytes. When thrown in the household trash, batteries end up in landfills. As the battery casing corrodes, chemicals leach into the soil and make their way into our water supply. Eventually they reach the ocean. Also, lithium in batteries reacts in a volatile way when exposed. Lithium can cause landfill fires that can burn underground for years. This releases toxic chemicals into the air, which increases the potential for human exposure. Over 90% of lead-acid batteries are recycled today. However, electric vehicle sales have exploded in recent years and those batteries are largely lithium-ion. They won't reach the end of life for a few years yet. By 2030, 11 million metric tons of Li-ion batteries [are expected](#) to reach the end of their service lives. Thus, Li-ion battery recycling is an issue that will take on much greater importance in coming years. Many of those batteries will be headed to landfills or to China under current trends. But lithium-ion recycling plants are coming online.

### **Commitment:**

*Immediate-* Buy rechargeable batteries. Recycle the ones you must dispose of (see below for sites).

*Long-term-* Recycle the batteries you have, along with other hazardous waste around your home. Also, recycle or donate your cell phones. Wireless batteries and technology are becoming a huge waste problem. To find a safe disposal site near you, look [here](#).

**Family Activity:** Make a list of all things that contain batteries in and around your house, including your car(s). Appoint a "battery czar" in the family. It's his or her job to manage the disposal of these batteries when they have reached their useful life. This would include the annual replacement of fire alarm batteries and cell phones.

### **Daily Prayer:** by Steve Garnaas-Holmes

I pray that God—The God the Beloved, Jesus Christ, showed us,  
 God our beautiful Life-Giver—

May give you a spirit of mindfulness and wisdom  
 As you deepen your openness to God,  
 So that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened,  
 You will have the hope God has for you.  
 May you live in wonder and trust of the gifts we all receive as God's Beloved.  
 May you feel in your bones the immeasurable greatness  
 Of the power of love when we trust it. This is God's power in us.

**To Learn More:** From [National Geographic](#), [Forbes](#), [Sciencing](#)

## 25. Socially Responsible Investing

**Daily Scripture:** “Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed anything as their own, rather everything was held in common... nor was anyone needy among them. They gave money to the apostles, and it was distributed to any members in need.” - *Acts 4:32, 34-35*

**Facts:** Socially Responsible Investing (SRI) expands the traditional investment decision-making process by adding social and environmental standards to the mix of considerations. The risks of climate change are already impacting investors, with increasingly frequent climate disasters like wildfires, drought, flooding and heatwaves threatening business operations and properties across the world. Many investors are now choosing to funnel their money into investments that address climate change risk, and asset managers are rushing to meet the demand.

Investors last year put \$20.6 billion into funds focused on environmental, social and governance — or ESG — issues, according to Morningstar data, almost quadruple the record the year prior. In the U.S., money managed with sustainable investing strategies now comprises over a quarter of total investment assets under management, according to the Global Sustainable Investment Alliance.

### **Commitment:**

*Immediate-* Invest locally. Shop at local stores. Use your local bank.

*Long term-* If you are investing or are interesting in investing, consider socially responsible investments. With this priority, you can use your mutual funds and other stock investments to support companies that align with your own ethical values, rather than companies that are doing opposite your ethical and environmental commitments. This can also move corporations to taking seriously social issues in their organizations. "Shareholders calling the world's most powerful companies to address their impacts on people and planet" is the mission of the [Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility](#).

**Daily Prayer: by Joy Harjo (from the Native American Tradition)**

To pray you open your whole self  
 To sky, to earth, to sun, to moon, To one whole voice that is you.  
 And know there is more that you can't see, can't hear,  
 Can't know except in moments steadily growing, and in languages  
 That aren't always sound but other circles of motion.  
 Like eagle that Sunday morning over Salt River.  
 Circled in blue sky in wind, swept our hearts clean with sacred wings.  
 We see you, see ourselves and know that we must take the utmost care  
 And kindness in all things.  
 Breathe in, knowing we are made of all this, and breathe, knowing  
 We are truly blessed because we were born, and die soon within a  
 True circle of motion, Like eagle rounding out the morning inside us.  
 We pray that it will be done in beauty. In beauty.

**26. Gas Mileage**

**Daily Scripture:** The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants, for they have transgressed laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore a curse devours the earth, and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt, therefore the inhabitants of the earth dwindled, and few people are left. *Isaiah 24. 5-6*

**Facts:** The Model T got about 25 miles mpg. In 2017, the entire fleet of U.S. made cars averaged 24.9 mpg. Today, the US transportation sector is the country's biggest contributor to the greenhouse gas emissions driving the climate crisis, accounting for over [29 percent of all emissions](#). Fine particulate matter, volatile organic compounds and nitrous oxides that contribute to smog, sulfur dioxide, all come out of tailpipes and into the air we breathe, leading to increased risk of cancer and respiratory illnesses.

The Global Fuel Economy Initiative (GFEI) has shown that by using existing cost-effective technologies it is possible to improve average vehicle fuel economy by 50% by 2050. Built into this is an increase in electric vehicles (EV) from 5% today to nearly 20% in the US in 2050. Achieving the 50% target would account for around a third of the CO2 reductions needed to achieve a 2 degrees emission trajectory. Achieving the GFEI target of doubling fuel economy would result in annual fuel savings worth \$400 billion in 2050.

**Commitment:**

Immediate- To improve gas mileage, be sure your car is tuned up and your tires properly

inflated. Compared to driving 70 mph, maintaining a highway speed of 55 mph can improve gas mileage by 17%. Avoid idling.

*Long-term-* Next time you purchase a car, choose the least polluting, most efficient vehicle for your needs. Examine the EPA's Green Vehicle Guide: <https://www.epa.gov/greenvehicles>

*Family Activity:* Talk to your children about the difference in gas mileage between shorter and longer trips in the car. Encourage them to think about saving gas by walking and biking when possible.

### **Daily Prayer: Interfaith Climate Action**

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

We pray that love and wisdom might inspire my actions and our actions as communities. . .

So that we may, with integrity, look into the eyes of brothers and sisters and all beings and truthfully say, we are doing our part to care for them and the future of the children.

May love transform us and our world with new steps toward life.

### **To Learn More:**

<https://www.climaterealityproject.org/blog/it-not-just-about-mileage-3-reasons-fuel-economy-standards-matter>

## **27. Oceans**

**Daily Scripture:** "God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good." - Genesis 1.10

### **Facts:**

As greenhouse gases trap more energy from the sun, the oceans are absorbing more heat, resulting in an increase in sea surface temperatures and rising sea level. Changes in ocean temperatures and currents brought about by climate change will lead to alterations in climate patterns around the world.

One body of water that is affected is the Gulf of Maine. It is at the doorstep of Cape Ann and the Annisquam Village Church. The Gulf of Maine, often regarded as a "sea within a sea", is a one of the world's most dynamic environments. Nourished by cold ocean waters and

characterized by a complex geomorphology made up of deep basins and shallow banks, this sea semi-enclosed sea is one of the most biologically productive marine ecosystems.

Spanning 36,000 square miles (93,240 km<sup>2</sup>) of water, the Gulf of Maine is characterized by powerful tides which mix the influx of North Atlantic waters with fresh waters from 60 rivers which drain a large watershed spanning much of the provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and the states of Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts which border its coast.

Over 3,000 marine species and birds call the Gulf of Maine home. Coastal marshes (e.g. The Great Marsh) and estuaries serve as nurseries and feeding grounds for fish, crabs, and shellfish, and abundant plankton provide the base of a rich food web all the way up to large fish, seals and whales. The Gulf of Maine provides a sanctuary for more than 30 species at risk, including the roseate tern and the critically endangered North Atlantic Right Whale. The State of the Gulf of Maine Report is an excellent resource for learning more about the Gulf of Maine.

Carbon pollution isn't just warming the climate, it's also making our oceans more acidic. Oceans absorb about a quarter of the carbon dioxide that humans produce burning fossil fuels each year. This is particularly bad for creatures with calcium carbonate in the shells are skeletons like mollusks, crabs and corals. Acidic water makes it harder for them to grow those shells. Science tests estimate the carbon pollution is causing the oceans to acidify faster than they have in the past 300 million years. In addition, around the world agriculture is the leading cause of water degradation in the United States, agricultural pollution is the top source of contamination in rivers and streams. <https://www.nrdc.org> Wetlands serve as a habitat for thousands of wildlife species, they filter contaminants and absorb sediments. Near shore they provide a natural buffer against storm surge and rising flood waters. Yet the nation is losing more than 50,000 acres of wetlands a year.

**Commitment:**

***Immediate-***

Explore and participate in educational programs and activities that focus on the Gulf of Maine as well as the nearby Great Marsh. There are a number of educational programs available for all ages. Here are links to some of the most notable Gulf of Maine educational resources:

[Gulf of Maine Research Institute](#)

[Shoals Marine Laboratory](#)

<https://www.greenwave.org/>

***Long Term-***

Participate in World Oceans Day which is a growing global movement to call on world leaders to protect 30% for Blue Planet by 2030 <https://worldoceansday.org/>.

**Family Activity:**

View a recent [documentary](#), produced by University of New England, which provides an

excellent overview of the challenges and issues confronting the Gulf of Maine.

Watch Coral Reef

<https://www.conservation.org/nature-is-speaking/ian-somerhalder-is-coral-reef>

Watch the film on sperm whales with James Nestor

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zsDwFGz00kg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zsDwFGz00kg>

**PRAYER:** Ohenton Kariwahtekwen - Iroquois Thanksgiving Address

We give thanks to all the waters of the world for quenching our thirst and providing us with strength. Water is life. We know its power in many forms - waterfalls and rain, mists and streams, rivers and oceans. With one mind we send greetings and thanks to the spirit of Water.

## 28. Renewable Resources: Solar

**Scripture:** When God gave to the wind its power, and apportioned out the waters by measure; when God made a decree for the rain, and a way for the thunderbolt; then God saw it and declared it; God established it, and searched it out. *Job 28:25-27*

### Facts:

Total US energy capacity in 2019 was 1 billion kilowatts (KW). The US has about 20% of the world's capacity and consumes about 20% of the available resources. In 2019, about 65% of the US capacity was coal & natural gas fired. About 20% was from wind and solar. 1,000 KW of power from a coal and / or gas fired power plant produces about 800 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per year. Conversely, 1 MW from solar can reduce the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by the same amount.

To keep the possibility of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees in sight per the Paris Agreement, global greenhouse gas emissions (CO<sub>2</sub>) need to drop by 55% by 2030, according to the UN. Right now, total emissions are around 53.5 gigatons per year of equivalent carbon dioxide.

A typical rooftop solar installation is about 5 KW (range 3-10kw), consisting of an array of 300 watt and 500 watt panels. Your roof-top solar system can reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions about 4 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>/ year. And, with your roof-top solar system, you will get a considerable reduction in your annual electric bill with a pay-back in fewer than 5 years, typically.

On Cape Ann, there are at least three companies providing solar panel system installation. Most homeowners who install solar panels are seeing **payback periods** between seven and eight years and 20-year savings estimates upwards of \$20,000. Some homeowners are seeing break-even points as low as three to four years in states where utility prices are high like Massachusetts and New York.

Going solar does not necessarily involve installing solar panels on your property. In 2019, the concept of shared solar or **community solar** – the idea of installing a massive solar farm from which hundreds or even thousands of people can source their electricity – is really

taking off. Currently, community solar is most popular in 4 states: California, Colorado, Minnesota and Massachusetts.

As of 2019, solar energy is cheaper than fossil fuels.

**Commitment:**

*Immediate-* Attend today's Creation Care meeting at 4 p.m. and learn how a local homeowner, John Moskal, put solar panels on his home. Watch Larry Chretien's [23 minute presentation](#) to the Cape Ann Climate Coalition on "The Role of Solar Fields to Augment a Municipal or Regional Aggregation Plan."

*Long term-* Think about installing solar panels on your home, if you have the right exposure. There are three companies on Cape Ann that do solar installation. Lobby the state government to force utility companies to accept solar buybacks.

**Family Activity:** Walk around your neighborhood. Count the number of homes with solar. Count the number of new homes under construction that are installing solar.

**Daily Prayer: From the Cantic of the Sun by St. Francis**

Be praised, my Lord, through all your creatures,  
especially through my lord Brother Sun,  
who brings the day; and you give light through him.  
And he is beautiful and radiant in all his splendor!  
Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness. Amen.

**To Learn More:**

[solarenergy.org](http://solarenergy.org)

[nationalgeographic.com/environment/global-warming/solar-power/energy.gov/articles/top-6-things-you-didnt-know-about-solar-energy](http://nationalgeographic.com/environment/global-warming/solar-power/energy.gov/articles/top-6-things-you-didnt-know-about-solar-energy)  
[energyinformative.org/solar-energy-facts/](http://energyinformative.org/solar-energy-facts/)  
[wilderness.org/articles/article/10-facts-you-probably-didnt-know-about-solar-energy](http://wilderness.org/articles/article/10-facts-you-probably-didnt-know-about-solar-energy)  
[forbes.com/sites/jamesellsmoor/2019/06/15/renewable-energy-is-now-the-cheapest-option-even-without-subsidies/](http://forbes.com/sites/jamesellsmoor/2019/06/15/renewable-energy-is-now-the-cheapest-option-even-without-subsidies/)

[cazeaultsolarhome.com/](http://cazeaultsolarhome.com/)

**29. Regenerative Farming**

**Daily Scripture:** Then God said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground." - Exodus 3.5

**Facts:**

The capacity of soil to function as a vital living ecosystem means that it will sustain plant life and the animals and humans that depend upon those plants as source of nutrition. Viewing soil as a living ecosystem reflects a fundamental shift in the way we care for our

nation's soils. Soil isn't an inert growing medium, but rather is teeming with bacteria, fungi, and other microbes that are the foundation of an important ecosystem. Soil is an ecosystem that can be managed to provide nutrients for plant growth, absorb and hold rainwater for use during dryer periods, serve as an optimal foundation for agricultural activities, and provide habitat for soil microbes to flourish and diversify to keep the ecosystem running smoothly.

Healthy soils not only sustain life but can sequester (e.g. capture and store) carbon, a vitally important function that aids in reducing CO<sub>2</sub> in the earth's atmosphere thus reversing global warming while supporting healthy ecosystems. A promising initiative which is aimed at restoring climate stability while rebuilding deteriorated ecosystems is regenerative farming (or land management) which involves smart soil management and restoration initiatives. Healing & Sustaining Soils = Regeneration

Climate strategies often focus on reducing emissions through renewable energy initiatives. Regenerative farming practices will sustain healthier soils that can sequester carbon thus reducing CO<sub>2</sub> and enhance efforts to reduce carbon in the atmosphere. Multi-pronged climate strategies that include renewable energy initiatives, as well as regenerative farming, are far more effective in restoring our climate's health.

Regenerative farming includes no tilling, increasing plant diversity among crops, sustaining root systems, and maintaining a soil cover throughout the year. These practices help regulate soil moisture, sustain plant and animal life within the soil, filter pollutants, and improve soil structure. Benefits from regenerative farming include rebuilding soil organic matter and restoring degraded soil biodiversity – resulting in both carbon drawdown and improving the water cycle.

Only 5% of farms in the United States are managed for soil health. Many programs are underway to help advance the regenerative farming here in the U.S. as well as globally. Organizations such as [Regeneration International](#) provide support in order to advance regenerative farming practices among farming communities. To locate farms in New England that implement these practices visit the Regeneration International website which includes a search engine entitled [Regenerative Farm Map](#).

**Commitment:**

*Immediate:* Over the Thanksgiving holiday, the whole family can watch "[Kiss the Ground](#)" on Netflix.

*Long-term:* Explore the resources on the "[Kiss the Ground](#)" website and become a soil advocate.

*Family Activities:* Explore the [Youth Education curriculum](#) created by Kiss the Ground.

**Prayer: by Felicity Collins (adapted)**

May we always remember that we belong to this beautiful Earth,

That she will bear our sorrows and share our joys.

May we be deeply rooted in our connection to this sacred Earth,  
Recognizing the Divine imperative to be her stewards.

May we always be drawn to where the air is good and fresh and lifegiving,  
So that we and all others may breathe freely.

May our passion for love and justice be kindled by bright morning sunrises and  
the fierce intensity of sunsets, that we may live into the Creator's vision of well-being for  
all. Amen.

### **To Learn More:**

Visit Regeneration International <https://regenerationinternational.org/about-us/>

Read: *Dirt to Soil: One Family's Journey Into Regenerative Agriculture*  
by Gabe Brown & Courtney White (Published 2018)

*The Carbon Farming Solution: A Global Toolkit of Perennial Crops and Regenerative  
Agriculture Practices for Climate Change Mitigation and Food Security* by Eric Toensmeier  
(published in 2016)

*English Pastoral: An Inheritance* By James Rebanks (published in 2020)

### **30. Green Christmas: Decorations, Feast, and Gifts**

**Scripture:** "For nothing will be impossible with God." - Luke 1.37

**Reflection:** We're dreaming of a white, wait... no, a Green Christmas! From eco-friendly fair trade gifts, to decking halls, and ideas for your holiday feasting, here are suggestions to get you in the Green Christmas Spirit.

As you contemplate your **Christmas gifting** consider:

1. How often will the gift be used? Choose quality over quantity, and choose gifts that will be treasured over time, and will be used again and again.
2. What is the gift made of? Opt for durable, sustainably produced materials. Think recycled, organic, or renewable, which have less environmental impact.
3. Does the gift have social impact? With research your gift will give beyond the recipient. From planting trees [One Tree Planted](#) to supporting women [Haiti Projects](#),

or giving back to our community [Backyard Growers](#), look for gifts that do more.

For green gift ideas: [earthhero.com](#)

4. How is your gift packaged? Look for compostable and recyclable over single-use plastic. Perhaps a basket of home cleaning products from [Essexsoaprefill](#) will delight.
5. In lieu of wrapping paper from virgin trees, use recycled and reusable wrapping paper, like groceries bags, old scarves, or tea towels. Use twine for ribbons, adorn the gift with a sprig of green or seashells and voila!

As you **deck your halls** consider:

1. Decorate *resourcefully*. Instead of buying new, make your own, or use what you already have, using eco-friendly materials like popcorn and recycled paper.
2. Energy efficient lighting. Outdoors use LED lighting, and set timer or turn off lights when not in use and unplug, saving energy and money.
3. Live vs. fake tree. If a Christmas tree is a must have, opt for real. While they are growing, trees remove carbon from the air, and they are 100% biodegradable. If you already have a fake tree, use it and don't toss until it is no longer useful. <https://www.growingagreenerworld.com/live-christmas-trees/>

As you plan the **holiday feasting** consider:

1. Shop at the local farmer's market. Local farmers continue to grow hearty greens through the winter, and you can find their produce at markets like [The Common Crow](#) , which offers organic food choices and sustainable products.
2. Eat lower on the food chain. Adding some vegetarian choices to your menu is good for the planet. [green america.org](#). For some yummy vegetarian ideas, <https://cookieandkate.com/category/vegetarian-christmas-recipes/>

**Family Activity:** Have an old-fashioned Christmas decorating evening with the kids. String popcorn and cranberries to decorate the tree. Turn dried orange slices into tree ornaments. Sip cocoa, eat homemade Christmas cookies, read a passage from "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens, and appreciate the joy of the season.

**Christmas Eco Prayer** ( to the rhythms of the Lord's Prayer) by [Ann Palmer](#)

Our Gaia, your Winter Solstice

Heralds Christmas time.

Stars in our eyes, fire in our hearts,

On Earth, as it is in visions.

Grant us the Great Christmas Blessing-  
 Birthing joy, love peace and oneness.  
 An everlasting carol sung each New Year  
 To Unite culture and Creation  
 In a Christmas spirit passion.  
 For ours is the power to create such a future.  
 Real reverence for Earth.

### 31. Fashion

**Scripture:** “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?”  
 - Matthew 6.25-26

#### **Facts:**

The clothing industry is the second largest global polluter after oil. According to the MacArthur Foundation, total greenhouse gas emissions related to textile production are equal to 1.2 billion tons annually - more than those of all international flights and maritime shipping trips combined. Complex production techniques and supply chains create massive environmental issues. Toxic finishes and dyes poison workers and leach into community water sources. The high demand for new clothes and fast production promotes slave labor that keeps millions of women at the poverty level. The good news is that consumer demand for sustainable fabrics and production methods is at an all time high, especially in Europe, and major designers like Stella McCartney are responding.

#### **Commitment:**

*Immediate:* Wear your clothes as long as they last. Women in particular succumb to social pressure to “have a new spring outfit,” or fall prey to advertising like “The Must-Have Color This Spring is Coral.” Continue to wear the clothes you own or donate them where they’re needed. Mend older clothes. If you don’t sew, you can cover a hole with a pretty patch. Take your shoes to the cobbler.

*Long-term:* Pay attention to the practices of the companies you buy from. You can research Sustainable Clothing Companies and 20 Best Sustainable Fashion Brands You Can Actually Trust. Major companies like Patagonia, Eileen Fisher, Allbirds and Athleta have become

leaders in sustainable fashion. Look up Pangaia and Sea Trees, an organization in San Francisco that plants a mangrove tree for every purchase made, storing up to one ton of CO2 per tree. Learn about [The Complete Guide to Ethical Children's Clothing Brands](#).

*Family activities:* Sustainability in production is becoming a fascinating field for young people to pursue in highschool, and even in grade school. Read - [Want to Teach Ethical Fashion to Kids? Here's How](#). Teach your children how cloth is made. Did they know it takes 714 gallons of water to make one t-shirt? Place a one gallon jug outside and see how many days it takes to fill with rain water. Take an old t-shirt you were going to throw away and see how many new things you can make of it - ribbon and wrapping for a present, a costume for a teddy bear, an apron for a doll, or braid strips of it to make a bracelet or a hair tie.

**Prayer:** (Adapted from Stephanie Kaza)

We live by the sun. We feel by the moon.

We move by the stars.

We live in all things. All things live in us.

We eat from the earth. We drink from the rain.

We breathe of the air.

We live in all things. All things live in us.

God lives in you. God lives in me.

God lives in all things. All things live in God.

God is the Creator of all things. The creation reveals the Creator's presence.

God lives in all things. All things live in God.

We dedicate our prayer to the Creator, the Creation, and all created beings.

God lives in all things. All things live in God.

Learn More:

<https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/fashion-on-climate>

## 32. Pests & Pesticides at Home

**Daily Scripture:** The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it; for he has founded it on the seas and established it on the rivers. *Psalms 24:1-2*

**Facts:** More than one billion pounds of pesticides are applied in the US alone (3 pounds/citizen!). Despite a number of good things pesticide might do, the adverse effects far outweigh them. The majority of Americans have common pesticides in their bodies. Pesticides stay in your body: some Americans have DDT in their systems 40 years later. Children are far more vulnerable to pesticide poisoning than adults. Studies have found a breakdown product of the roach, termite and flea insecticide (chlorpyrifos) in the urine of 92 percent of the children and 82 percent of the adults evaluated. Children who have been exposed to household insecticides and professional extermination methods within the home are three to seven times more likely to develop non-Hodgkin's lymphoma compared with children who have not been exposed to pesticides. They are devastating the bee population. Pesticides drift into the air and seep into the groundwater. They work their way up the food chain and the interaction among pesticides is poorly understood.

**Commitment:**

*Immediate-* Stop using chemical pesticides, like Round-Up, and insecticides in your home! Don't call the exterminator. Try traps or boric acid (which is odorless). Look online for more ideas [here](#).

Review the chemicals stored in your home and dispose of chemicals properly. The Gloucester Department of Public Works hosts an annual Household Hazardous Waste Day in September .

*Long term-* If you need to remove pests, contact a eco-exterminator, or make sure to talk with your neighbors to move children and pets away from the area.

Join the National Resources Defense Council to lobby for a ban on toxic pesticides including chlorpyrifos, which is widely used on food crops that can damage children's brains and glyphosate, the main ingredient in Roundup, which WHO has linked to cancer.

<https://www.nrdc.org/ban-toxic-pesticides>

**FAMILY ACTIVITY:** Watch videos from [Conservation International](#), like "Mother Nature." Make weed killer: 1/2 gal. white vinegar, half cup of table salt, 1 teaspoon of dish soap. Pour in a spray bottle and use.

**Daily Prayer: by J. Birch** (amended)  
God of Harvest, Gardener Supreme,

You feed us, equip us and having provided for us  
 look to a different harvest, a fruitfulness of lives in service to you and others.  
 God of Harvest, Gardener Supreme,  
 Prune us, harvest us,  
 that our lives might bring glory to you. Amen.

### To Learn More:

**"Toxic 'forever chemicals' found in pesticide used on millions of Mass. acres when spraying for mosquitoes,"** Boston Globe, Dec. 1, 2020

**National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides**

### 33. Home Interior Decor

**Scripture:** "In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also." - John 14.2-3

**Reflection:** Home sweet *sustainable* home. More than ever these days, our homes are extensions of ourselves—a place of nourishment, renewal, family time, and our remote place of work. Our surroundings can support our health, and allow us to tread lightly on the planet, and reduce our carbon footprint.

The simplest way to positively affect your home environment is by considering some eco-living principles:

**Reduce.** Put real thought into every purchase. Do I need this? What purpose does it serve? Will I use it? Or is it another item that will collect dust?

**Reuse, repurpose, buy vintage.** Renew what you already have before scrapping it for something new. That old dresser becomes new with a coat of eco-friendly milk paint! [www.realmilkpaint.com](http://www.realmilkpaint.com). A wooden wine crate can become storage for hats and mittens. And if you purchase pre-used furniture and decor on places like [Ebay](http://Ebay), this will allow you to buy without using valuable planet resources.

**Sell or donate:** If the furnishings are no longer useful or stashed in a storage unit, consider donating to an organization like The Second Glance [www.foodpantry.org](http://www.foodpantry.org),

and you will also serve your community. And take the children with you so they learn about the importance of donating what is no longer useful in your home.

***Shopping for new furniture.*** Avoid chemical-laden pressure-treated wood and particleboard. Instead look for [FSC-certified](#) and reclaimed woods or renewable bamboo. You can now find these furnishings at stores like IKEA and Crate & Barrel. <https://www.lastenvironmentalist.com/discover-stylish-eco-friendly-and-sustainable-furniture-brands-and-products/> .

***Choose Eco-friendly Wall Paint.*** Avoid standard paints that contain airborne chemicals and gases. These low level toxic emissions, known as volatile organic compounds or VOCs, can impact our health. Instead, opt for low and [zero-VOC paints](#).

***Fabrics matter.*** So often fabrics like rayon and conventional cotton are found in curtains, slipcovers, bedding. Rayon is made from cellulose that is chemically converted from wood pulp, and is a large contributor to deforestation, wasting 70% of the virgin tree during the production process. Conventional cotton contains high levels of potentially harmful pesticides and toxic chemicals, making it one of agriculture's most polluting crops, and growing it requires huge water use. Best choices are these fabrics: *Lyocell fiber, aka Tencel*, is a 100% biodegradable fiber that is produced from sustainably sourced eucalyptus trees. *Organic Cotton*, grown without the use of herbicides or pesticides is a smart choice. Likewise a nod goes to *Organic hemp fiber*, grown without pesticides and minimal water use, and Organic Linen, made from the flax plant.

***Carpeting.*** If you are fortunate to have wood floors, no carpeting can be the best idea. Commercial carpeting is produced with chemicals that linger long after installation in your home. For something soft under your feet, choose earth friendly carpeting made from natural fibers-sisal, seagrass, organic cotton, organic wool and bamboo.

***Candles.*** Flickering candles add ambience to any setting, but commonly used candles often contain paraffin, a hydrocarbon mixture that is harmful to the environment. Good options are soy or beeswax candles that use essential oils for fragrance to add that special something to your home, like those from [Near and Native candles](#).

**Family Activity:** Encourage the kids to reuse. If they are bored with their bedroom decor,

have them save images from magazines, cereal boxes, etc, and engage them with a decoupage project on an old wastebasket. And marvel at their creative young minds.

**Prayer: “A Blessing for a New Home” by John O’Donohue (amended)**

May this house shelter your life.  
When you come in home here,

May all the weight of the world  
Fall from your shoulders.

May your heart be tranquil here,  
Blessed by peace the world cannot give.

May this home be a lucky place,  
Where the graces your life desires  
Always find the pathway to your door.

May nothing destructive  
Ever cross your threshold.

May this be a safe place  
Full of understanding and acceptance,  
Where you can be as you are..

**To Learn More:**

[“DISCOVER STYLISH ECO-FRIENDLY AND SUSTAINABLE FURNITURE”](#)

**34. River of Life**

**Daily Scripture:** “Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.” - Revelation 22: 1-2

**Fact:** The phrase "river of life" is not just a random set of words. Rivers have been essential not only to humans, but to all life on earth, ever since life began. Plants and animals grow and congregate around rivers simply because water is so essential to all life.

It might seem that rivers happen to run through many cities in the world, but it is not that the rivers go through the city, but rather that the city was built and grew up around the river. For humans, rivers are diverted for flood control, irrigation, power generation, public and municipal uses, and even waste disposal. The flow of water through rivers is part of the water cycle that originates from rain runoff and groundwater from the surrounding landscape (i.e. watershed) and then eventually drains into coastal waters. These waters often accumulate chemicals and waste which impact the lives that depend upon the waters to survive. For example 1 out of 3 Americans get their drinking water from rivers.

Climate change is altering precipitation patterns creating serious flooding in some regions as well as droughts in other areas. Lower water levels in rivers, lakes and streams, leave less water to dilute pollutants. Excess nutrient runoff and higher temperatures stimulate overgrowth of algae and deplete oxygen levels (i.e. hypoxia) within the surface waters. As a result a “[dead zone](#)” occurs every summer in the Gulf of Mexico from the runoff from the Mississippi River watershed (which encompasses over 40% of the continental U.S.). The net result each year are fish kills that impact the local communities and their economies.

Nitrogen and phosphorus (primarily from animal waste, fertilizer runoff, and sewage treatment plant discharges) are killing our waterways. Excess nitrogen and phosphorus can harm drinking water supplies; is toxic to plants, wildlife, and small pets; creates mass fish kills; and requires public health agencies to close swimming areas. This problem can be found throughout the world..

A [group](#) is working to reduce the Gulf of Mexico “dead zone” through state led nutrient reduction strategies and targets across the Mississippi River watershed. They are identifying targets based on models that help predict how hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico is linked to nutrients from the Mississippi River Basin.

The Gulf of Mexico “Dead Zone” is the 2nd largest Dead Zone in the world. It is reversible, even preventable, with research and proper control measures enforced by the federal government and states in the Mississippi River Basin.

**Commitment:**

*Immediate:* Examine your household use of water and begin to identify ways to conserve water. Some tips can be found [here](#). Minimize the use of chemicals on your property to eliminate runoff from fertilizers, waste, etc.

*Longterm:* Each September collect household hazardous waste and deposit it on Gloucester’s [Household Hazardous Waste Day](#). Join an organization dedicated to protecting local land and rivers:

[American Rivers](#)

[Mass Rivers Alliance](#) [Ipswich River Watershed Association](#) -

[Essex Greenbelt](#)

[Parker River U.S. Fish & Wildlife Refuge](#)

## [Charles River Watershed Association](#)

### Family Activities:

Explore one of the many North Shore rivers (Ipswich, Parker, Essex, Merrimack, etc) either by hiking and/or canoeing. Guided tours are available through a number of local organizations such as: [Mass Audubon Society](#)

Try fly fishing. It's an excellent way to learn about all aspects (e.g. chemistry, biology, geology) of rivers and the wildlife that depend upon them.

### **Prayer: Nipmuc Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Great Spirit, Great Spirit, Almighty Great Spirit,

Hear me: I stand before Thee, Great Spirit.

I thank you for this beautiful day.

I thank you for my health and well-being.

I pray daily for all of my people.

I pray for the future to come of seven generations.

I pray for all living things.

I pray with the sun every morning.

We give thanks for a bountiful harvest.

We give thanks for the beautiful forests.

We give thanks for all of the trees and beautiful flowers surrounding us.

We give thanks for the beautiful lakes, rivers and waterfalls.

We give thanks for all good things.

I have spoken. Ho!