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The way you live your life has an impact on the resources of God's Earth. We can help you make informed choices.

"When we believe in transformation at the local and personal level, we are laying the sure foundations for change at the national and international level."

Rowan Williams, Chair of Christian Aid & former Archbishop of Canterbury



How to start

Start by calculating your environmental footprint. The tools available from **WWF** and **The Climate Stewards** will take you through your lifestyle choices, tell you how you scored, and give you tips on how to reduce your environmental impact.

The sections below give suggestions for sustainable living across several areas: the food you eat; plastic; transport; waste and recycling; and energy use.

The food you eat

At harvest time, Christians often remember with thanks those who labour to produce the food on which we depend. But we often don't go on to think about the way in which the food we eat impacts on the lives of humans, animals, and the earth.

What impact does the food I eat have?

Food production, packaging, and transportation consumes energy and results in carbon emissions which threaten to raise the average global surface temperature. It has been suggested that our food is responsible for 20% of the UK's entire carbon footprint.

You can reduce your carbon footprint by:

- Eating seasonally.
- Eating locally.
- Limiting the amount of meat in your diet.

Calculate the impact of the food you eat.

Could you think about growing some of your own food, whether as an individual or part as a community project? Find out how. And if you're buying food which has been exported, look for sustainable forms of export agriculture which contribute to the economic and social development of producers. Fairtrade, for example, exports products around the world. But they require their producers to make environmental protection part of farm management.

Animal welfare

Farming is becoming more intensive. Choosing animal products from higher welfare systems is an important recognition of their status as fellow creatures of God. Find out more about the different labels used to indicate standards of animal welfare here (<https://www.ciwf.org.uk/your-food/know-your-labels/>).

Food waste

Did you know that the UK throws away 7.2 million tonnes of food each year, most of which could have been eaten? Food that goes to landfill rots, producing methane (a greenhouse gas). There are many ways to reduce what is left and make sure spare food is put to good use:

- Get some tips from Love Food Hate Waste.
- Share leftover food after a church event using the Olio app.

Plastic

An estimated 12.7 million tonnes of plastic end up in our oceans each year. Much of this from single-use plastic packaging. There are a number of organisations working to change our attitudes to plastics, offering advice on how to cut down on your plastic use:

- GreenPeace's [plastic pledge](#).
- Plastic Planet's [#PlasticFreeAisle](#).
- WRAP's [circular economy](#).
- WRAP's [plastic pact](#).

In 2018, the Church of England launched a plastic-free living Lent campaign, which you can view [here](#).

Transport

Driving

If you already have a car, think about how to drive in a fuel-efficient manner to reduce the wear and tear on your car. If you're looking to buy a new car, factor comparative carbon emissions into your decision making. Could you get a hybrid or electric car?

You may find there are some journeys you can make using a different form of transport, or by car-sharing with others.

Cycling

Initiatives for buying bikes, such as tax-free schemes provided through some employers, and additional cycle networks are making cycling a more attractive mode of transport. Get inspired by joining a [Ride+Stride](#) event near you or getting involved with [Sustrans](#).

Flying

Flying is one of the biggest contributors to an individual's carbon footprint. A return flight from London to San Francisco emits around 5.5 tonnes of CO2 equivalent (CO2e) per person — more than twice the amount generated by a family car in a year (find out more about flying in relation to climate change on the [BBC's website](#)).

For shorter journeys, consider whether you could take a different mode of transport to flying, such as a train or a boat. If you do make a journey by plane, consider whether you can [offset the carbon emissions](#) from your journey.

Walking/running

Are there some journeys — perhaps taking your children to school — that you could walk instead of drive? If you're a runner, see whether you could run some or all of your commute to work; take a look at [Runner's World's top tips for run commuting](#).

We are increasingly using video conferencing technology to facilitate meetings; perhaps there are some meetings you could arrange to join digitally instead of travelling to.

Public transport

There is a wealth of tools available online to help plan journeys by public transport. If you don't use public transport because the service doesn't work for you, campaign to change it:

- Write letters to your local newspaper and MP.
- Join a public transport advocacy group.
- Meet with your local government representative.

Waste and recycling

The amount of waste we recycle has increased. But we are still behind some of our European neighbours, some of whom recycle over 70% of their waste. Plenty of recyclable waste still ends up in our landfills. Think of it as a waste hierarchy:

Reduce

What you can. If you can't reduce it t

Re-use

What you can. If you can't re-use it

Recycle

What you can. Some is then burn

Create energy

For electricity. The remainder i

Disposed

Of in landfill. This is the last

As well as basic paper, plastic, and glass recycling, think of ways to reduce—and re-use your household or church waste:

- Food waste (see above).
- Textile waste: many councils and charities have textile recycling collection points (<https://www.recyclenow.com/what-to-do-with/clothing-textiles-0>)
- Household item waste: do you have things that could be repaired rather than thrown out? You could take them to a repair café, or even set one up yourself. Or, if they are no longer needed, think about donating them to a charity shop or advertising them on Freecycle [link].
- Water waste: treating water is an intensive process which contributes to our carbon footprint. Take a look at Water Wise (<https://waterwise.org.uk/save-water/>) for their tips on how to save water.
- Energy waste (see below).

Part of reducing our waste is switching to a 'circular economy' mindset; working to get the most out of resources, rather than operating with a 'use and dispose' mindset.

Energy

If we each save a little energy at home, together we can have a huge impact on the UK's carbon footprint.

Our top ten simple tips

1. Turn your thermostat down by 1°C. It could cut your heating bills by up to 10 % and save you money.
2. Is your water too hot? Your cylinder thermostat shouldn't need to be set higher than 60°C/140°F.
3. Close your curtains at dusk to stop heat escaping through the windows.
4. Always turn off the lights when you leave a room.
5. Don't leave appliances on standby. And remember not to leave them charging unnecessarily.
6. If you're not filling up the washing machine, tumble dryer or dishwasher, use the half-load or economy programme.
7. Only boil as much water as you need (but remember to cover the elements if you're using an electric kettle).
8. Fix leaking taps and make sure they're fully turned off! A dripping tap wastes energy and in one week wastes enough water to fill half your bath.
9. Replace your light bulbs with LEDs. They will reduce costs and last up to 12 times longer than ordinary light bulbs.
10. Switch to a renewable energy provider: take a look at the [suggestions here from Money Supermarket](#).

For more advice, visit:

- [Energy saving trust](#).
- [Centre for sustainable energy](#).

Also of interest

The recycling guide

[Why, how and where to recycle](#)

Eco Church

[Find out how your church can take steps toward a greener future.](#)

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