



# Carbon Fast for Lent 2017



Brought to you by Michigan Interfaith Power & Light

## Why fast?

Throughout history, fasting has been integral to the spiritual practice of people of all faiths. Like pebbles in our shoe, the hunger pangs of fasting are a steady reminder of an intention to leave behind an old way of life and to prepare for spiritual rebirth. The feeling of hunger prompts a continued awareness of the need to become more conscientious in our actions and to whole-heartedly commit to the inward transformation we seek. Fasting also reminds us to keep in our hearts the plight of the poor and the imperative to care for the least of these.

Many of us grew up “giving something up” for Lent—candy, meat, or other pleasures—only to gleefully indulge in the forbidden item when the season passed and then carry on with business as usual. While going without something we enjoy gives us a taste of sacrifice—and perhaps a gentle reminder of the those who routinely do without—it does not often bring about a deeper inward change.

We hope that this guide to a Lenten “Carbon Fast” will help you not merely “give up” some conveniences temporarily, but will assist you in making a more fundamental transformation as you prepare to awaken to new life in Christ.

## Why carbon?

Because carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is a heat-trapping gas that contributes to global warming, reducing carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions is urgent and critical to slowing the progression of climate change.

Climate change is happening right here, right now. From droughts and erratic weather patterns that interfere with agriculture, to heat waves and natural disasters that claim lives and wreak havoc on communities, we must take swift and effective action now—not later.

Those who are being affected most severely by climate change— including millions of people in the developing world who have already lost their homes

and livelihoods— are those whose own carbon footprints are the smallest, and who have fewest resources to cope with the fallout. This means that reducing our carbon emissions is also a matter of social justice.

Because every individual contributes to carbon emissions, every individual can also make changes to emit less. By making changes in the ways we drive our cars, heat and cool our buildings, and consume food and other goods, we do our part in reducing the amount of carbon we add to the atmosphere.

## How to use this calendar

Our hope is that you will commit this Lenten season to heeding the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor by taking steps to cut your carbon emissions. We hope that these steps will help you build sustainable habits and move toward what Pope Francis has called an “ecological conversion”—a transformation of the heart that shifts how you understand your relationship with nature and other people.

To these ends, we have suggested one sustainability-related activity for each day between Ash Wednesday and Easter. Some of these might be things you’re already doing. Some require a little preparation. Some might be challenging.

If doing one activity each day seems overwhelming, you might instead choose one activity each week and repeat it each day. Or choose one action and do it for the whole season.

Christians are called to dwell in community, to share in one another’s burdens and joys, and to work together as members of one body. You might see if members of your congregation or family want to participate in the Carbon Fast with you.

In this season of repentance and rebirth, we hope above all that this calendar will be a tool for spurring action and reflection, helping us right our relationship with the Earth, in this season and beyond.

# March 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
			<b>Ash Wednesday</b> “You are dust, and to dust you shall return.” Set your intention this Lent to reflect deeply on humanity’s one-ness with God’s Creation.	Calculate your carbon footprint: <a href="http://www3.epa.gov/carbon-footprint-calculator/">www3.epa.gov/carbon-footprint-calculator/</a> .	Set at least 1 concrete goal for shrinking your footprint. Write it down and hang it up someplace visible.	For Palm Sunday, order sustainably grown palms by Mar. 18: <a href="http://EcoPalms.org">EcoPalms.org</a> . (Remember that you can use any leftover ashes in the garden.)
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Set your programmable thermostat for the season and your schedule. In winter, set it lower when you are away and at night (55-60°).	Schedule a free home energy assessment and get free efficiency upgrades. DTE: 866-796-0512 Consumers: 888-316-8014	If you have more than one car, try to use the more fuel efficient one for errands and trips.	Consider how environmental degradation affects the poor. Fasting may help remind you of their hardship.	Learn about our oceans, commit to buying <u>sustainably</u> fished seafood.	Learn how your diet impacts climate change: <a href="http://VegMichigan.org">VegMichigan.org</a> Consider cutting out meat for one day a week (beyond Lent).	The average American family throws out ~25% of the food they buy. Take stock of your fridge and get creative about using leftovers.
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
30% of landfill mass is food/yard waste. Composting is good for the Earth and your garden: <a href="http://HowToCompost.org">HowToCompost.org</a>	Run your dishwasher only with a full load. Skip the heat cycle and let dishes air dry.	If you buy coffee on the go, bring your travel mug with you!	Water heating is very energy intensive. Cut your energy waste by turning your water heater down to ~120°.	Don’t forget about our member resources and discounts: <a href="http://MichiganIPL.org/MemberCenter">MichiganIPL.org/MemberCenter</a>	<b>St. Patrick’s Day</b> Many religions have statements on animals. Read yours at <a href="http://HumaneSociety.org">HumaneSociety.org</a> .	Take steps to green your congregation: <a href="http://MichiganIPL.org/StewardsOfHope">MichiganIPL.org/StewardsOfHope</a>
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Take walk outside, greet neighbors, feel sun on your face. Rejoice in all Creation!	<b>Spring Equinox</b> Put out bird food. Delight in all God’s creatures (even the squirrels!).	Solar curious? Get a free, instant site assessment online: <a href="http://GeoStellar.com">GeoStellar.com</a>	Save trees and reduce waste by stopping unwanted junk mail at <a href="http://DMAChoice.org">DMAChoice.org</a>	Set your car tire pressure to the recommended level for optimal gas mileage.	Tame your lead foot on the highway. Higher speeds (55 mph+) reduce fuel economy.	Consider and pray about your consumption habits. What would Jesus wear, drive, eat, etc.?
26	27	28	29	30	31	
Find the most eco-friendly way to get to church today.	Individual actions alone are not enough! Join our advocacy work: <a href="http://MichiganIPL.org/Advocacy">MichiganIPL.org/Advocacy</a>	Is your voter registration current? Check it out at <a href="http://Michigan.gov/Vote">Michigan.gov/Vote</a>	Find how to reach your elected officials. Commit to calling on them as clean energy issues arise.	As you plan your garden, learn about and choose native perennials that require less water.	Set your printer default to “duplex” and buy paper that has recycled content.	

# April 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
						Discard incandescent lights and install LEDs. (Seriously, throw the old bulbs out. NOW!)
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Observe the Sabbath by unplugging your electronics and yourself! Relish in simple pleasures.	Protect our water-ways by learning about proper <u>prescription drug disposal</u> .	Wash clothes in cold water. Modern soap does not need hot water to be effective.	Explore how you can make an up-coming vacation greener. (For instance, drive or take a train instead of flying.)	Just Say No to single-use plastic bags. Keep cloth bags handy for shopping.	Buy nothing today. Borrow, repurpose or simply go without.	Evangelize about energy efficiency! Tell a friend about how cutting energy waste saves \$\$ and helps our Earth.
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Start some organic seeds indoors. Witness God's love in action!	Always power down your computer at end of day. Screen savers do not save energy.	Every device draws power even after it's charged or switched off. Use a smart power strip to eliminate this energy waste.	Check your furnace filter. Replace it every 3 months for optimal efficiency.	<b>Holy Thursday</b> Minimize idling. For every 10 minutes a car idles, it 1 pound of CO <sub>2</sub> is released into the atmosphere.	<b>Good Friday</b> On this day of the crucifixion, learn about how to leave a green legacy: <a href="http://GreenBurialCouncil.org">GreenBurialCouncil.org</a>	<b>Holy Saturday</b> Swap out at least 1 commercial cleaning product with something non-toxic (vinegar is almost magic—just ask Grandma).
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
<b>Easter</b> Today we are reborn into new life. Commit to 3 things you'll keep doing to cut your carbon emissions.	Bonus: Recalculate your carbon footprint: <a href="http://www3.epa.gov/carbon-footprint-calculator/">www3.epa.gov/carbon-footprint-calculator/</a> Did it shrink? Let us know!					



Brought to you by Michigan Interfaith Power & Light