



# THE FOURTH EPISTLE

## SAINT JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

### MOBILE, ALABAMA

The Reverend Thomas Heard, Rector  
The Protestant Episcopal Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast  
The Right Reverend James Russell Kendrick, Bishop

Vol. XXXI, Issue 2

February 2021

## FROM THE RECTOR:

Dear Ones,

In our calendar, there have been some shifts over time. The Nativity, Epiphany, Baptism of Our Lord, and First Miracle at the Wedding in Cana of Galilee used to be celebrated together on 6 January. The Presentation, previously known as the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, was celebrated on 14 February - 40 days after the Epiphany, *et al.*

By the late fourth century, the church had begun to celebrate the Nativity on 25 December. That meant that the Presentation had to be moved to 2 February in order to maintain the 40 day time interval between them. Why, you ask? Because it has to do with the obligations laid out in Leviticus 12:6-8. Here's what it says (Robert Alter translation):

And when the days of her purity are completed, whether for a son or a daughter, she shall bring a yearling lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a turtledove for an offense offering to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, to the priest. And he shall bring it forward before the Lord and atone for her, and she shall be clean from the flow of her blood. This is teaching about the childbearing woman, whether of a male or of a female. And if her hand cannot manage enough for a sheep, she shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for a burnt offering and one for an offense offering, and the priest shall atone for her, and she shall be clean.

So that's where Purification comes from. Wisely, we dropped that name in favor of the Presentation of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple. For a first male child, this was a requirement, because that son was "promised" to God. The parents "bought him back" after having presented him on the fortieth day after his birth.

Another feast day that underwent a name change was

Circumcision, which became Holy Name. This day is eight days after the Nativity. According to Torah, that is the day when the male child receives circumcision and is named. These days, circumcision isn't even universally practiced in Judaism, so stepping away from it in favor of naming makes so much sense.

Shakespeare, in *Romeo and Juliet*, has Juliet bemoaning Romeo's surname, her family's sworn enemy. Names are identity. Jewish children often have two names, a secular one and a Hebrew one. Some Christian confirmands are given a confirmation name. We have names by which other folks know us; we have a name by which our family knows us; we might have a different name by which God knows us; and we have the name by which we know ourselves. Part of our Baptismal rite includes the naming of the person to be baptized. Again, it is all about identity.

In Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wind at the Door*, the protagonists battle the "Echthroi" (literally, "the enemies"), who are engaged in "un-naming" things. Planets, Stars, Galaxies, people. By taking away the name of the thing/person/creature, it ceases to exist, because it ceases to have an identity. Put another way, there is no longer a way to differentiate one piece of matter from another if it doesn't have an identity. I'll add that the Echthroi work at the smallest possible level to do their work, undermining the basic structure.

You and I identify by something other than our names. We identify as being followers of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God. We call ourselves "Christians", a name that first was vocalized as an epithet in the first century. It is an identity that we carry that has no visible mark. But, we are permanently marked: "sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked as Christ's own for ever. "It is indelible, it cannot be removed. Whether we have one name or several names, even if those names are removed, we will still belong to God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FEBRUARY LITURGICAL CALENDAR

### The Presentation of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple

We will celebrate the feast of the Presentation on Tuesday, 2 February at a 12:00 PM Solemn Mass. "Presentation" is a new name for what's previously been known as "The Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary" and "Candlemas." In the Eastern tradition, this feast is called "the meeting of Christ with Simeon." In Jewish tradition, first born sons were to be dedicated to God in remembrance of the sparing of the first born of Israel and the exodus from Egypt. In Christian tradition, this marks the recognition by Simeon and Anna that the Messiah, long promised by God, has appeared.

### Anskar, Bishop of Scandanavia

Born in Corbie, France in 801, he answered the call of the king of Denmark for Christian missionaries in 826 and established a school and a mission. He was called to Sweden in 829 to do similar work. Anskar was consecrated Archbishop of Hamburg in 831 and continued his work among the Scandinavians. It took over 100 years for his work to bear fruit. We will commemorate Anskar's life and work at our Wednesday Said Mass on 3 February.

### Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Season of Lent and is a fast day. It gets its name from the practice of the imposition of ashes, made from the palm branches from the previous year. We hold the ashes to be sacramental (not a Sacrament), which serve as reminders of our repentance or turning from old ways to the Lord. In ancient times, dusting with ashes was one way for a penitent to express sorrow and regret for sins and faults.

We will hold the Ash Wednesday liturgy twice on 17 February. The first will be a Said service at 10:00 AM and the second a Sung service at 6:00 PM. Throughout the day, the church will be open for prayer and imposition of ashes.

### Saint Matthias

After Judas' death, the disciples met and decided that they must replace him. They met, prayed and finally chose Matthias as the new twelfth disciple. We know nothing more of Matthias, where his mission field was, what he was like, or where he came from. We commemorate his life on Monday, 24 February at a Said Mass at 10:00 AM.



## Vestry

The regular meeting of the Wardens and Vestry of Saint John's Church was convened at 11:36 AM on Sunday, 10 January 2021. The proposed agenda was adopted and the minutes of the 13 December meeting were approved as submitted.

Nikki Shaw and Geri Moulton were excused. Kristen Turner filled in for Nikki as clerk pro tempore.

Bootsie reviewed the financials for December. She noted that the balance sheet shows \$29,600 received from PPP now that the loan has been forgiven.

Fr. Heard reported that the west lancet window at the altar was re-infested by termites. Retreatment and repair estimate are TBD.

Fr. Heard reported that Thomas Roofing inspected the church roof and the bell tower. Inspection revealed loose tiles as a result of being lifted by Hurricane Sally. In addition it appears that the bell tower has been rocked by the wind and the copper top has been damaged. A claim has been filed with Church Insurance. We have not seen the adjuster yet.

As is usual at the first meeting of the calendar year, the Vestry elected officers for 2021. They are:

Cindy Gass, Senior Warden  
James Christiansen, Junior Warden  
Connie McLean, Treasurer  
Nikki Shaw, Clerk.

The meeting was adjourned with prayer by Fr. Heard.

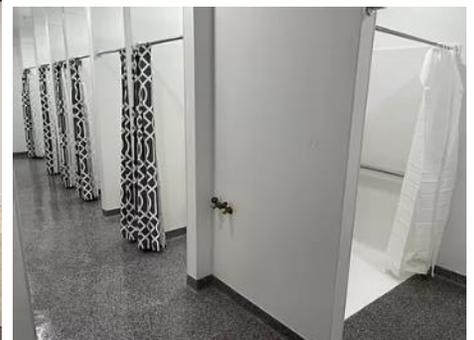
# OUTREACH

From January, 2018, until the onset of Covid in March, 2020, Saint John’s served as the day center for McKemie Place, Mobile’s shelter for unaccompanied homeless women. The temporary situation at Saint John’s was intended as a bridge to the day that McKemie Place could move into their own 24-hour shelter. That day finally arrived on December 4, when the new facility was dedicated, with our own Father Heard delivering the blessing for the new facility.

In partnership with Redeemer, Saint John’s has helped provide the evening meal for McKemie Place residents for many years. Every 4th Thursday, we provide the drinks, desserts and paper products for up to sixty women. If you would like to help with this ministry, please contact James Christiansen.



Above: Fr. Thomas with McKemie Place directors Allison Crane and JP Thurman. Top left: Fr. Thomas with other speakers at the McKemie Place dedication. Other photos: beautiful living spaces at the new facility.



# FEBRUARY 2021 AT SAINT JOHN'S

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 Brigid 830A MP	2 Presentation of Our Lord Jesus Christ 830A MP 12P Mass	3 Anskar 830A MP 10A Mass	4 Cornelius the Centurion 830A MP	5 Martyrs of Japan 830A MP	6
7 Epiphany 5 10A Mass	8 830A MP	9 830A MP	10 830A MP 10A Mass	11 830A MP	12 830A MP	13 Absalom Jones
14 Last Epiphany 10A Mass 1130A Ventry	15 Thomas Bray 830A MP	16 830A MP	17 Ash Wednesday 830A MP 10A Mass 6P Mass	18 Martin Luther 830A MP	19 830A MP	20
21 Lent 1 10A Mass	22 830A MP	23 Polycarp of Smyrna 830A MP	24 St. Matthias 830A MP 10A Mass	25 830A MP	26 830A MP	27 George Herbert
28 Lent 2 10A Mass	Omitted: 02/14 – Cyril and Methodius, Monk and Bishop, Missionaries to the Slavs, 869, 885 02/17 – Janani Luwum, Archbishop of Uganda, and Martyr, 1977 02/28 – Anna Julia Haywood Cooper, Educator, 1964					
31 Epiphany 4 10A Mass						

## 40 Days; 40 Ways A Guide to a Green Lent



This month's newsletter insert is a 40-Day Creation Care Challenge offered by the Gulf Coast Creation Care organization as an option for your Lenten discipline this year. There are 40 different suggestions for practicing to be good stewards of God's creation; perhaps some of these will work for you and your family. May this calendar remind us to be more mindful of the ways that our daily habits impact both our "common home" and all those with whom we share it. On behalf of all of those most harmed by a damaged creation, including future generations, may we answer God's call to be faithful stewards.

### YES, WE ARE DUST: STARDUST.

Today on Ash Wednesday, we are told, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

At first glance, this is a humbling statement, an appropriate way to begin Lent, the season of penitence. The threats and damage of climate change remind those of us who live Western lifestyles that we certainly have a great deal to repent for.

But there is so much more to this statement than sin and repentance. There is beauty, interconnection, and dare we say even hope.

"Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

We aren't just any old dust: We are the very oldest dust. We are from stardust, the very same stardust as all God's other creations. God created the universe as hydrogen atoms, which flared forth from one dense moment. Over time, those atoms coalesced into gas and dust, which can form interstellar nebulae. The energy of those nebulae serve as the furnaces that forged everything else – starting with stars and planets, but also including you, me, the laptop I'm writing this on, the snack you're eating as you read, and even our thoughts themselves and the music that's on in the background. All energy and all matter comes from stardust. American Indians had it right: The stars really are our ancestors.

So we, like everything else in existence, are dust. That means that we are deeply connected and related to everything else — to other humans, to animals, to plants, to rocks, to water, to earth systems, to the cosmos itself. We are also the one known part of creation that God chose to give a conscience, a special capacity to reflect, which means that we have a special duty to care

for the rest of creation during our time among it.

We come from dust, and it is also to the earth's dust that we shall return. That means that God's earth was here before us, and it will be here after us. We don't get to pretend it belongs to us, or that it is here for us to destroy and use up. But we do get to explore it. We get to enjoy it. And we are called to protect it from ourselves. When we fail in that duty, we are called once more, to repent and to try again.

So today, remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return. And as you remember, rejoice, and act.



Pictured: *The Pillars of Creation in the Eagle Nebula*, [via NASA](#).

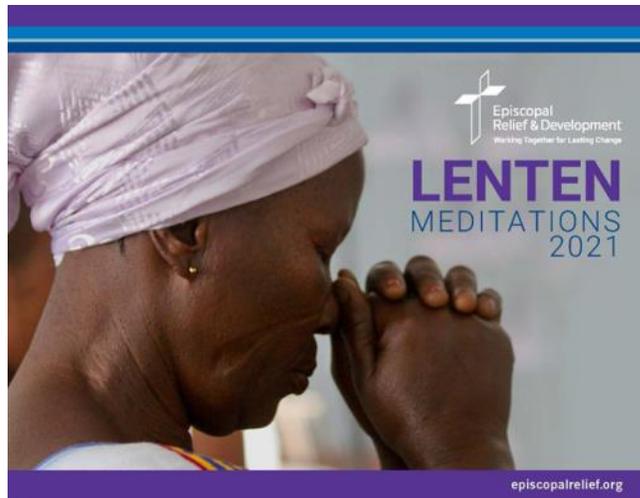
Source: *Episcopal Climate News*, March 6, 2019



## EPISCOPAL RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT FOCUSES ON LAMENT IN 2021 LENTEN MEDITATIONS

In response to the unprecedented events of the past year, Episcopal Relief & Development's 2021 Lenten Meditations share deeply personal reflections on the theme of lament from a diverse group of writers. Many of the authors share experiences related to a variety of issues including disease, violence, racial injustice and poverty.

You are invited to meditate on these reflections daily and to engage the "Four Steps of Lament," by resting, reflecting, repenting and ultimately being restored to God and to one another. Above, you can view the English and Spanish version in both color and black and white. If you would like to subscribe to receive these meditations daily in your inbox, please subscribe at <http://bit.ly/ERD-Meditations>.



Note, the Lenten Meditation booklet is completely virtual this year as churches continue to gather virtually.

"The expressions of lament in the 2021 Lenten Meditations share sorrow, but they also come from a place of deep love," said the Most Rev. Michael B. Curry, Presiding Bishop and Primate, The Episcopal Church. "Because God loves us we know that God joins us in lamenting the loss of any living being."

This Lent, may God restore your soul by bringing you into the bright new life that is our Easter promise. And may you continue to know that you are loved now and always.



### 2021 PLEDGE SUMMARY

As this newsletter goes to print, we have received financial commitments from 27 pledge units for 2021 totaling \$87,480. In 2020, we received 41 pledges totaling \$192,513.

If you plan to pledge to the 2021 operating budget, please let us know as soon as possible. If a pledge card was enclosed with your 2020 year-end contribution statement, it means we have not yet received your 2021 pledge. Extra cards are available in the church office.



Saint John's wishes to extend a sincere thank you to Thomas & Lynne Studer, who made a donation in memory of Mary Bonner.



Gerri Moulton	02/01
Bob Sheffield	02/05
Mary Sheffield	02/08
LaNeisha Anderson	02/10
Alison Stoker	02/12
Lee Dorsey	02/15
Thomas Heard	02/15
Debbie Ollhoft	02/15
Lisa Chestang	02/17
David Thompson	02/23

## January Birthdays



Celebrating January 2020 birthdays at St. John's with Mary Jones, Bob Ross, Irene Yeager and Janet Buckley. (Photo by Irene Yeager)



### **For healing grace and continued strength, we pray for our members:**

Lisa Chestang, David Rich, Bob Anderson, Carolyn Pearce, Mary Jones, Connie Anderson, Cookie Rich, Paula & Bob Ross, Jean Brown, Ashley Garris, Jerry Fulford, James Christiansen, Bill Duke, Audrey Garner, Joyce Lee, Marian Boykin, Ron Brown, Jayson Chestang, Budd McLean, Mary Catherine Warren.

### **For our Family and Friends:**

Nathan de Bert, David Sheffield, Patrick Henry, Patsy Christiansen, Gwendolyn Carey, Helon Jones, Helen Guthrie, Eddie Hun, Donnie Chestang, Katelynn Tillman, Karen Twilley, Nancy Payne, Donna Pigg, Robert Levy, Tiffany Matthews, Betty Williams, Latecia Cushion Knight, Bonnie Jernigan, Britney Butler, Neal Tourné, Sandy & Ray Michel, Connor Crist, Paul Nelson, Krystal Hiatt.

### **For victims of war and their families, and members of our Armed Forces and their families:**

Ryan Hurt, Jacob Hester-Heard, Marcus Rich, Ross Hussmann, Ellis Garner, Eric Mattoon.

## Contact Us

### Staff:

The Reverend Thomas Heard, *rector*  
[rector@stjohnsmobile.org](mailto:rector@stjohnsmobile.org)

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Lella Lowe  
 Financial Secretary  
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Jack Ruppe  
 Sexton

### Vestry:

James Christiansen, *junior warden*

Bootsie Cieutat

Cindy Gass, *senior warden*

Connie McLean, *treasurer*

Gerri Moulton

Nikki Shaw, *clerk*

Mary Sheffield

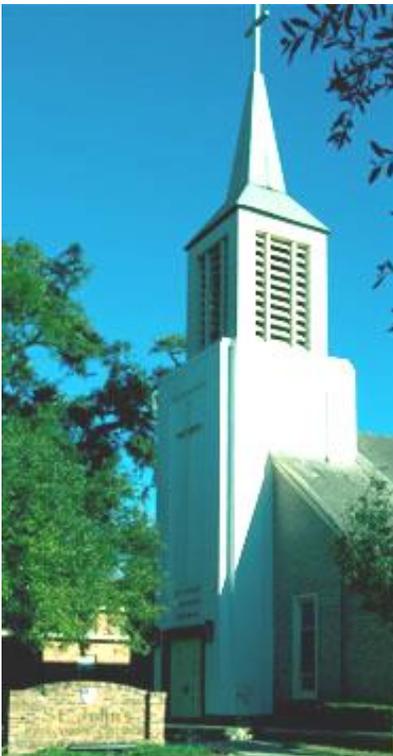
Kristen Turner

Butch Yeager

Saint John's Episcopal Church  
 1707 Government Street  
 Mobile, Alabama 36604

Nonprofit Organization  
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



**Come Worship With Us!**

Monday—Friday:

8:30AM Morning Prayer

Sunday:

9:00AM Adult and Youth Christian  
 Formation

10:00AM Holy Eucharist

Wednesday:

10:00AM Holy Eucharist;  
 Healing on the 1<sup>st</sup>  
 Wednesday of the month.

Other Feasts and Holy Days are  
 observed throughout the year; please  
 see our website for the latest schedule.

**Parish Office**

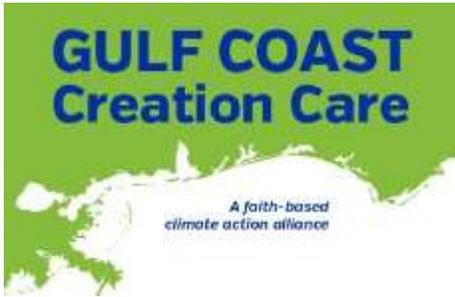
Monday-Thursday  
 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Telephone: 251-479-5474

Fax: 251-473-1230

[www.stjohnsmobile.org](http://www.stjohnsmobile.org)

SAINT JOHN'S: THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN MIDTOWN MOBILE  
 Grounded in shared sacramental life and moving into the world  
 to be the hands of Our Lord.



# 40-Day Creation Care Challenge

Sign up for daily updates and reminders: [info@gulfcoastcreationcare.org](mailto:info@gulfcoastcreationcare.org)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>"If the simple fact of being human moves people to care for the environment of which they are a part, Christians [and people of all faiths] in their turn realize that their responsibility within creation, and their duty towards nature and the Creator, are an essential part of their faith."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">--Pope Francis, <i>Laudato Si</i>, Paragraph 64</p>			<p><b>17 February</b></p> <p>"All are from the dust, and to dust all return." - Ecclesiastes 3:20. Reflect with gratitude on the reality that we are all made of and fed by the earth, and that to the earth we will return. <a href="http://bit.ly/YesWeAreStardust">bit.ly/YesWeAreStardust</a></p>	<p>18</p> <p>Plan a garden today and start some seeds to germinate indoors. An herb garden in your kitchen window can be an easy way to begin. Start a community garden at your church. <a href="http://bit.ly/ACES-Lawn-Garden">bit.ly/ACES-Lawn-Garden</a></p>	<p>19</p> <p>Get into the recycle habit. Paper, plastic, steel, aluminum, glass, batteries, light bulbs, electronics, compostable food, printer cartridges, clothing, etc. Check with your local recycling facility.</p>	<p>20</p> <p>If a single decision in Congress can either enhance or undo literally millions of individual acts of caring for the Earth, we can and must try to influence such decisions. Take time to write or call an elected official about a creation care issue.</p>
<p>21</p> <p>"Be still and know that I am God." - Psalm 46:10. Rest today. Learn how to "make the Sabbath a delight" with <a href="http://bit.ly/making-sabbath-delight">bit.ly/making-sabbath-delight</a></p>	<p>22</p> <p>Meatless Monday: Livestock account for more than 14% of global greenhouse gas emission. A meatless diet could cut those emissions by 63%! <a href="http://bit.ly/eat4good">bit.ly/eat4good</a> <a href="http://bit.ly/SwitchPlantBased">bit.ly/SwitchPlantBased</a></p>	<p>23</p> <p>Run your dishwasher only with a full load. Use its energy-saving modes when available, and avoid using the heated drying option. Skipping the heated drying option can cut dishwasher energy use by 15-50%.</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Keeping your tires properly inflated and ensuring that your car is well maintained can increase your fuel efficiency. Remove any extra weight from the car.</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Plant trees and shrubs that turn your yard into a bird oasis - and a carbon sponge. <a href="http://bit.ly/BirdOasis">bit.ly/BirdOasis</a> <a href="http://nwf.org/NativePlantFinder">nwf.org/NativePlantFinder</a></p>	<p>26</p> <p>Take time today to repair something that you might otherwise have discarded and replaced. Rather than buying a bunch of new things, focus on what you already have.</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Want to host a film screening and discussion about Creation Care at your church? Check out this list: <a href="http://bit.ly/LifeOnOurPlanet">bit.ly/LifeOnOurPlanet</a> <a href="http://bit.ly/Kiss-the-Ground">bit.ly/Kiss-the-Ground</a> <a href="http://unbreathable.org/">unbreathable.org/</a> <a href="http://bit.ly/Cool-the-Planet">bit.ly/Cool-the-Planet</a></p>
<p>28</p> <p>Consider the gifts given to you. Pray about how you are called to use your time, talent, passion, relationships, and treasure to care for our common home. <a href="http://bit.ly/CreationStewardship">bit.ly/CreationStewardship</a></p>	<p><b>1 March</b></p> <p>In the US, &gt;30% of all food is wasted. Reduce your food waste by planning well and eating leftovers. Consider composting what's left over at home. <a href="http://bit.ly/BeatFoodWaste">bit.ly/BeatFoodWaste</a></p>	<p>2</p> <p>Place an insulating cover on your water heater. "Blankets" can be found at hardware stores. Save money and energy by buying a new, efficient water heater. <a href="http://bit.ly/EfficientWaterHeater">bit.ly/EfficientWaterHeater</a></p>	<p>3</p> <p>Reducing our carbon footprint is best, but for the more difficult challenges of our lives, i.e. flying, we can buy carbon offsets to support CO2 reduction projects. <a href="http://bit.ly/TranspClimateCh">bit.ly/TranspClimateCh</a> <a href="http://bit.ly/BuyCarbonOffsets">bit.ly/BuyCarbonOffsets</a></p>	<p>4</p> <p>Green grass lawns are not so "green." Learn how to cultivate grounds that are good for people, plants, and creatures at home: <a href="http://bit.ly/greenergrounds">bit.ly/greenergrounds</a> and at church: <a href="http://bit.ly/sacredchurchgrounds">bit.ly/sacredchurchgrounds</a></p>	<p>5</p> <p>Fossil fuel divestment takes the fossil fuel industry to task for its culpability in the climate crisis. Check your pension and bank holdings and divest from fossil fuel holdings where possible. <a href="http://bit.ly/DivestFossilFuels">bit.ly/DivestFossilFuels</a> <a href="http://bit.ly/GreenCredCards">bit.ly/GreenCredCards</a></p>	<p>6</p> <p>Organize a congregational stream cleanup for Earth Month in April - Project Clean Stream: <a href="http://bit.ly/projectcleanstream">bit.ly/projectcleanstream</a> Season of Creation in September: <a href="http://alabamacoastcleanup.com">alabamacoastcleanup.com</a></p>

7 Read Ephesians 5:8-14 and "live as children of the light" without electricity! As a Sabbath practice, turn off or unplug everything you can for half an hour.	8 Choose local foods that are in season. Transporting food long distances, whether by truck, ship, rail or plane, uses fossil fuels for fuel and for cooling to prevent food spoilage. <a href="http://bit.ly/BuyLocalFood">bit.ly/BuyLocalFood</a>	9 Turn your air conditioner thermostat up by one degree during the summer and down by one degree or more during the cooler months. Buy a programmable thermostat and replace dirty filters.	10 Adjust your driving habits to improve mileage. If you must drive, avoid unnecessary braking and acceleration, saving up to 40% in fuel consumption.	11 Water your garden in the evening or early morning, when the water evaporates less. Use a drip hose instead of a large nozzle. Plant only bulbs that are native to your region.	12 It's time to swear off plastic bags. Get reusable bags to keep in the car or in a backpack. If the reusable bag isn't around, look for a box or another way to carry everything. <a href="http://bit.ly/TakeYourOwnBag">bit.ly/TakeYourOwnBag</a>	13 Petition and lobby Congress (state and federal) to support rooftop solar and other sustainable energy in your region. <a href="http://bit.ly/EnergyAlabama">bit.ly/EnergyAlabama</a> <a href="http://ratesofsolar.com">ratesofsolar.com</a>
14 The average person spends 87% of their time indoors, and another 6% of their time inside a vehicle. Adopt a new spiritual practice that makes you more attuned to God's creation. <a href="http://bit.ly/spiritual-practices-nature">bit.ly/spiritual-practices-nature</a>	15 Cook at home; share meals with family and friends; reduce take-out and fast foods. <a href="http://bit.ly/SustainableHomeCooking">bit.ly/SustainableHomeCooking</a>	16 Re-wear clothes which aren't dirty and only run your washing machine when you have a full load. Using the cold water setting saves energy; avoid using the dryer. Read more here: <a href="http://bit.ly/DitchYourDryer">bit.ly/DitchYourDryer</a>	17 Walk, take public transportation, carpool, rideshare or bike to your destination when possible. This not only reduces CO2 emissions, it also lessens traffic congestion and the idling of engines.	18 Chemical fertilizers do long-term harm to soil and waters. Fertilize with mulch, compost and manure; use natural methods to remove pests. <a href="http://bit.ly/YardRenovation">bit.ly/YardRenovation</a>	19 Shop selectively. While we can't produce all of our own needs, we can do our best to find companies that do it in a responsible way. As consumers, we can speak with our dollars. <a href="http://bit.ly/Shop-Sustainably">bit.ly/Shop-Sustainably</a>	20 Volunteer or donate. There are organizations out there trying to clean things up, so we can support them with either our time or our money.
23 Read "Letter to a Young Climate Activist on the First Day of the New Decade" and reflect on the beauty that still surrounds us and the hope that we can find through collective action: <a href="http://bit.ly/RebeccaSolnitletter">bit.ly/RebeccaSolnitletter</a>	22 Purchase Fair Trade coffee, tea, chocolate and other goods. Regenerative farming practices are a potential solution to climate change. Make sure your church is serving fair trade coffee. <a href="http://bit.ly/FairTradeAction">bit.ly/FairTradeAction</a>	23 In your home, replace incandescent and compact fluorescent lights with LEDs. Each bulb replaced will save hundreds of pounds of climate pollution over time. <a href="http://bit.ly/chooseLEDs">bit.ly/chooseLEDs</a>	24 Time to trade in that gas guzzler for a car that gets 45+ miles per gallon. Technology is rapidly improving, so think about whether an electric car might be an option for you.	25 Plant a tree. A single tree will absorb 1 ton of carbon dioxide over its lifetime. No place to plant a tree? Learn how to plant one in a national forest. Visit <a href="http://arborday.org">arborday.org</a> and <a href="http://alivingtribute.org">alivingtribute.org</a>	26 Just say no to bottled water and styrofoam cups. Carry your own mug and refillable water bottle with you as often as possible. <a href="http://bit.ly/StoryOfBottledWater">bit.ly/StoryOfBottledWater</a>	27 At 8:30pm today, join hundreds of millions of people around the world who will be switching off all lights for one hour to commit to global climate action and more mindful energy use: <a href="http://EarthHour.org">EarthHour.org</a>
28 Rest today. Take a break from TV and internet. Turn off everything, and unplug it if you can. Play a game, go for a walk, or read a book! Read Blessed Earth's resources on Sabbath living: <a href="http://SabbathLiving.org">SabbathLiving.org</a>	29 Buy foodstuffs (and other consumables such as shampoos and detergents) in bulk, using your own reusable container when possible. <a href="http://bit.ly/BuyingInBulkTips">bit.ly/BuyingInBulkTips</a>	30 Caulk and weatherstrip around doors and windows to plug air leaks. Insulate your walls and ceilings. This can save about 25% of home heating bills. Find project ideas and how-tos: <a href="http://bit.ly/weatherizehome">bit.ly/weatherizehome</a>	31 Use traffic apps like Waze to help avoid getting stuck in traffic jams. On longer trips, turn on the cruise control, which can save gas.	<b>1 April</b> Prevent contamination runoff. Don't use chemical pesticides or fertilizers on your lawn. On the driveway, avoid harmful cleaning products and take proper care of spilled oil. No matter where you live, the ocean is downstream.	2 Set a timer for 5 minutes before your shower and see how your normal shower length compares. Try to finish your next shower before the timer goes off. Take another green step and install a low-flow shower head. <a href="http://bit.ly/TakeShorterShowers">bit.ly/TakeShorterShowers</a>	3 Work with a team at your church to celebrate Earth Week April 16-25. Interfaith Power and Light's 2021 theme is Sacred Ground: Cultivating Connections between Food, Faith and Climate." <a href="http://faithclimateactionweek.org">faithclimateactionweek.org</a>

**April 4: Take some time today to reflect on all of the activities that you have performed during these 40 days, and how they have brought you into greater harmony with the earth and with all life. Conclude your 40-day Creation Care practice by making a personal pledge to serve God and serve others by pursuing a more sustainable way of life.**