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| <p>For Anglicans Lent is the time when we remember the 40 days that Jesus spent in the wilderness, facing challenge and temptation. It is a time when we reflect on God's purpose for our life. This is a challenge to give up single-use plastics-to reduce the actions which damage God's Creation. <b>Over 8.3 billion tonnes</b> of plastic have been produced since the 1950's. That's enough plastic to cover every inch of the UK ankle-deep more than 10 times over. Just <b>9%</b> was recycled.</p> | <p><b>ASH WEDNESDAY</b><br/><b>ISAIAH 24:4-5</b><br/>'The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers: the heavens languish together with the earth. The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants...'</p> | <p><b>2. Give up disposable cups &amp; drinks in plastic bottles.</b><br/>Carry a travel mug or water bottle. Get a reusable bottle, fill it up with tap water before leaving the house, and refill it wherever you happen to be.</p> | <p><b>3. Bring your own reusable bags</b><br/>Plastic bags and produce bags in particular are often used for minutes before being discarded. Most plastic bags are not recycled, ending up in landfills.</p> | <p><b>4. Carry your own non-plastic cutlery</b><br/>Plastic disposable cutlery and straws are among the worst plastic pollution culprits. Get in the habit of carrying your own cutlery with you and leaving a set in the car.</p> |
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| <p><b>Sunday</b><br/><b>Psalms 104:25-30</b><br/>'There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures beyond number – living things both large and small.'<br/>By 2050 we could have more plastic than fish by weight) in the sea.</p> | <p><b>6. Buy in bulk to minimize or eliminate packaging</b><br/>This goes for food and drink as well as cleaning supplies, toiletries, hardware items- anything that may come in plastic packaging.</p> | <p><b>7. Avoid overpackaged, processed, canned and frozen convenience foods.</b><br/>Stay clear of the three tomatoes sitting on a Styrofoam tray and covered in plastic cellophane.</p> | <p><b>8. Buy fresh bread that comes in either paper bags or no bags</b><br/>This eliminates plastic wrapping waste from shop bought bread and you help support local businesses.</p>             | <p><b>9. Choose milk in returnable glass bottles</b><br/>Some areas have local dairies that provide milk in returnable glass bottles rather than plastic- or plastic-coated cardboard.</p> | <p><b>10. Use non-plastic containers for food, leftovers, freezing, storage, take-out, travelling....</b><br/>Request takeaways use your container instead of their disposable one. Take a container when you buy meat, fish or cheese.</p> | <p><b>11. Shop at markets</b><br/>Fresh food markets are not only often cheaper and fresher than supermarkets but they sell fruit and vegetables loose. Don't forget to take your reusable bags.</p> |
| <p><b>Sunday</b><br/>Everyday millions of microplastics enter the sea from toiletry products<br/>Start a conversation or ask to talk about how you are taking action on plastics at church</p>   | <p><b>13. Look around your bathroom - what plastics can you replace?</b><br/>Do you have plastic bottles sitting in the shower? Find a brand you like and try and get it in bulk.</p>                   | <p><b>14. Use a razor with removable blades</b><br/>Disposable razors and razor blades are two of the biggest contributors to plastic waste.</p>   | <p><b>15. Check labels of toiletries</b><br/>Did you know some facial scrubs &amp; toiletry products contain tiny plastic beads? Avoid anything with 'polyethylene' listed as an ingredient.</p> | <p><b>16. Use a bamboo toothbrush</b> or a toothbrush with recyclable heads and try to find dental floss that doesn't come in plastic packaging.</p>                                       | <p><b>17. Use bar soap</b> instead of liquid hand soap.<br/>This is an easy change to make, if you are feeling keen you can even make your own soap bars.</p>   | <p><b>18. Choose lotions and lip balms in plastic free containers</b><br/>Some shops will now refill glass toiletry containers or give you a discount if you return old packaging.</p>               |

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| <p><b>Sunday Colossians 1:16-17</b><br/>‘For by him all things were created; things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible.’<br/>Consider organising a community litter pick.</p>      | <p><b>20. Look around your kitchen</b> and see what plastics you can replace. Use a dish brush with a wooden handle and compostable bristles.</p>                                       | <p><b>21. Use natural cleaning cloths instead of plastic &amp; synthetic sponges</b><br/>Compressed natural cellulose sponges are often sold without any plastic packaging.</p>   | <p><b>22. Use a blender made of glass</b><br/>If you find yourself needing to purchase a new blender in the future, try and go for a glass alternative if possible.</p>                   | <p><b>23. Buy glass and/or stainless-steel</b> containers for food storage. Glass works well for freezer storage as well, just ensure you leave room at the top of the jar</p> | <p><b>24. Avoid foil wrapped</b> crisps and chocolate. Some sweet wrappers are now recyclable but don’t forget to check.</p>   | <p><b>25. Share your leftovers or unwanted food.</b><br/>Reduce waste by joining a food sharing network like Olio.</p>                                |
| <p><b>Sunday Job 28:12-13</b><br/>‘But where can wisdom be found? Where does understanding dwell? Do you use disposable cups at church? Can you encourage people to bring their own mug?’</p> | <p><b>27. Choose natural fibres</b><br/>Synthetic fabrics create microfibre pollution when washed. When buying new clothes look for organic cotton, wool, and other natural fibres.</p> | <p><b>28. Alter and modify old shoes and clothing into new</b><br/>Do you have old clothes and shoes that you never wear because they don’t fit or are out of style? Take them to a tailor or cobbler for alteration.</p> | <p><b>29. Buy clothing second-hand</b><br/>Buying clothes second hand not only saves you money but ensures that the secondhand clothes you purchase have an extra-long lease of life.</p> | <p><b>30. Do a clothes swap</b><br/>Look online for advice on how to set up your own. Search for "Kleiderbörse" or similar in your region.</p>                                 | <p><b>31. Invest in quality</b><br/>By doing this you are minimising the demand for cheap items that end up in landfill. In the long run it will save you money.</p> | <p><b>32. Request zero plastic packaging</b><br/>If you’re buying clothes online ask the retailer if they can reduce or remove plastic packaging.</p> |
| <p><b>Sunday Psalm 24:1-2</b><br/>‘the earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it.’</p>   | <p><b>34. Put a ‘Keine Werbung’ sticker on your letterbox.</b><br/>This will reduce the number of letters with plastic windows. It will also reduce your paper waste!</p>               | <p><b>35. Make it from scratch.</b><br/>Try and cook as much as possible from scratch and take your own sandwiches and snacks when you go out.</p>  | <p><b>36. Avoid wet wipes</b><br/>These contain plastic fibres so don’t break down like toilet roll, despite often being described as flushable.</p>                                      | <p><b>37. Acquire necessary plastic items used instead of new.</b><br/>Check second-hand shops, brockis, etc. Look for sharing groups locally.</p>                             | <p><b>38. Buy second-hand plastic-free furniture</b><br/>There’s lots of advice about repairing, upcycling and finding good wooden or metal furniture online.</p>    | <p><b>39. Don’t buy new CD’s and DVD’s</b><br/>Rather borrow CD’s from the library or friends. Does your church have books, CD’s etc. to borrow?</p>  |

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| <p><b>Sunday Micah 6:8</b><br/>         ‘He has shown you O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.’</p> | <p><b>41. Avoid plastic pens and giveaways.</b><br/>         Try using a refillable fountain pen or pencils.</p> | <p><b>42. Bring your own toiletries.</b><br/>         Skip the free travel size shampoos, soaps, and lotions offered by hotels. Instead fill up your own reusable travel-size containers at home.</p> | <p><b>43. Avoid the Mini bar snacks and drinks.</b><br/>         Not only incredibly expensive but they all come in plastic packages or bottles. Even if you can’t avoid plastic entirely you can resist single-serving sizes.</p> | <p><b>44. What lasting changes are you going to make?</b><br/>         Do you find yourself looking at plastics in a different way? List three things you are going to commit to changing.</p> | <p>1.<br/>         2.<br/>         3.<br/>         .....</p> | <p>Join the A Rocha Portugal Plastic Waste Reduction Campaign, The UN’s Clean Seas campaign and/or Greenpeace’s Plastic Pledge. Find out your own plastic footprint.</p> |
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I am aware that some of these suggestions may not be available in your country/area. However, there may be something else which is closer to home. If so, please could you share it with me so that I can pass it on to others? Any ideas please to Elizabeth Bussmann DEO for the Anglican Diocese in Europe – at [bemdeo@gmail.com](mailto:bemdeo@gmail.com)  
 Grateful thanks to the original Church of England Lent Plastic Challenge organisers!