

<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. Over 8.3 billion tonnes 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 9% was recycled.</p>	<p>ASH WEDNESDAY ISAIAH 24:4-5 '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>2. Give up disposable cups & drinks in plastic bottles. 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>3. Bring your own reusable bags 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>4. Carry your own non-plastic cutlery 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>Sunday Psalm104:25-30 'There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures beyond number – living things both large and small.' By 2050 we could have more plastic than fish by weight) in the sea.</p>	<p>6. Buy in bulk to minimize or eliminate packaging This goes for food and drink as well as cleaning supplies, toiletries, hardware items- anything that may come in plastic packaging.</p>	<p>7. Avoid overpackaged, processed, canned and frozen convenience foods. Stay clear of the three tomatoes sitting on a Styrofoam tray and covered in plastic cellophane.</p>	<p>8. Buy fresh bread that comes in either paper bags or no bags This eliminates plastic wrapping waste from shop bought bread and you help support local businesses.</p>	<p>9. Choose milk in returnable glass bottles Some areas have local dairies that provide milk in returnable glass bottles rather than plastic- or plastic-coated cardboard.</p>	<p>10. Use non-plastic containers for food, leftovers, freezing, storage, take-out, travelling.... Request takeaways use your container instead of their disposable one. Take a container when you buy meat, fish or cheese.</p>	<p>11. Shop at markets 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>Sunday Everyday millions of microplastics enter the sea from toiletry products Start a conversation or ask to talk about how you are taking action on plastics at church</p>	<p>13. Look around your bathroom - what plastics can you replace? Do you have plastic bottles sitting in the shower? Find a brand you like and try and get it in bulk.</p>	<p>14. Use a razor with removable blades Disposable razors and razor blades are two of the biggest contributors to plastic waste.</p>	<p>15. Check labels of toiletries Did you know some facial scrubs & toiletry products contain tiny plastic beads? Avoid anything with 'polyethylene' listed as an ingredient.</p>	<p>16. Use a bamboo toothbrush or a toothbrush with recyclable heads and try to find dental floss that doesn't come in plastic packaging.</p>	<p>17. Use bar soap instead of liquid hand soap. This is an easy change to make, if you are feeling keen you can even make your own soap bars.</p>	<p>18. Choose lotions and lip balms in plastic free containers Some shops will now refill glass toiletry containers or give you a discount if you return old packaging.</p>

<p>Sunday Colossians 1:16-17 ‘For by him all things were created; things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible.’ Consider organising a community litter pick.</p>	<p>20. Look around your kitchen and see what plastics you can replace. Use a dish brush with a wooden handle and compostable bristles.</p>	<p>21. Use natural cleaning cloths instead of plastic & synthetic sponges Compressed natural cellulose sponges are often sold without any plastic packaging.</p>	<p>22. Use a blender made of glass If you find yourself needing to purchase a new blender in the future, try and go for a glass alternative if possible.</p>	<p>23. Buy glass and/or stainless-steel 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>24. Avoid foil wrapped crisps and chocolate. Some sweet wrappers are now recyclable but don’t forget to check.</p>	<p>25. Share your leftovers or unwanted food. Reduce waste by joining a food sharing network like Olio.</p>
<p>Sunday Job 28:12-13 ‘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>27. Choose natural fibres Synthetic fabrics create microfibre pollution when washed. When buying new clothes look for organic cotton, wool, and other natural fibres.</p>	<p>28. Alter and modify old shoes and clothing into new 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>29. Buy clothing second-hand 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>30. Do a clothes swap Look online for advice on how to set up your own. Search for "Kleiderbörse" or similar in your region.</p>	<p>31. Invest in quality 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>32. Request zero plastic packaging If you’re buying clothes online ask the retailer if they can reduce or remove plastic packaging.</p>
<p>Sunday Psalm 24:1-2 ‘the earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it.’</p>	<p>34. Put a ‘Keine Werbung’ sticker on your letterbox. This will reduce the number of letters with plastic windows. It will also reduce your paper waste!</p>	<p>35. Make it from scratch. Try and cook as much as possible from scratch and take your own sandwiches and snacks when you go out.</p>	<p>36. Avoid wet wipes These contain plastic fibres so don’t break down like toilet roll, despite often being described as flushable.</p>	<p>37. Acquire necessary plastic items used instead of new. Check second-hand shops, brockis, etc. Look for sharing groups locally.</p>	<p>38. Buy second-hand plastic-free furniture There’s lots of advice about repairing, upcycling and finding good wooden or metal furniture online.</p>	<p>39. Don’t buy new CD’s and DVD’s Rather borrow CD’s from the library or friends. Does your church have books, CD’s etc. to borrow?</p>

<p>Sunday Micah 6:8 ‘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>41. Avoid plastic pens and giveaways. Try using a refillable fountain pen or pencils.</p>	<p>42. Bring your own toiletries. 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>43. Avoid the Mini bar snacks and drinks. 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>44. What lasting changes are you going to make? Do you find yourself looking at plastics in a different way? List three things you are going to commit to changing.</p>	<p>1. 2. 3. </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
 Grateful thanks to the original Church of England Lent Plastic Challenge organisers!