

# Lent Plastic Challenge

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 year we challenge you 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 1950s. That's enough plastic to cover every inch of the UK ankle-deep more than ten times over. Just **9%** was recycled.

'To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth' The Anglican Communion's Fifth Mark of Mission

**14 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 ...'

**15 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.

**16 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.

**17 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.

## Food & drink

**Sunday 18 February**  
**Psalms 104: 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.

**19 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.

**20 Avoid overpackaged, processed, canned and frozen convenience foods**  
Stay clear of the three tomatoes sitting on a Styrofoam tray and covered in plastic cellophane.

**21 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.

**22 Choose milk in returnable glass bottles**  
Many areas have local dairies that provides milk in returnable glass bottles rather than plastic or plastic-coated cardboard.

**23 Use non-plastic containers for food**—lunches, 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.

**24 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.

## Bathroom

**Sunday 25 February**  
Every day **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.

**26 Look around your bathroom and see what plastics you can replace**  
Do you have plastic bottles sitting in the shower? Find a brand you like and try and get it in bulk. If it's not available in bulk – ask the manufacturer to offer it.

**27 Use a razor with removable blades**  
Disposable razors and razor blades are two of the biggest contributors to plastic waste.

**28 Check labels of toiletries**  
Did you know some facial scrubs & toiletries products contain tiny plastic beads? Avoid anything with "polyethylene" listed as an ingredient.

**1 Use a bamboo toothbrush or a toothbrush with recyclable heads**  
and try to find dental floss that doesn't come in plastic packaging.

**2 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.

**3 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.

## Kitchen

**Sunday 4 March**  
**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.

**5 Look around your kitchen and see what plastics you can replace**  
Use a dish brush with a wooden handle and compostable bristles.

**6 Use natural cleaning cloths instead of plastic & synthetic sponges**  
Compressed natural cellulose sponges are often sold without any plastic packaging.

**7 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.

**8 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.

**9 Avoid foil wrapped crisps and chocolates**  
Some sweet wrappers are now recyclable but don't forget to check.

**10 Share your leftovers or unwanted food**  
Reduce waste by joining a food sharing network like Olio.

## Clothing

**Sunday 11 March**  
**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?

**12 Choose natural fibres**  
Synthetic fabrics create microfibre pollution when washed. When buying new clothes look for organic cotton, wool, and other natural fibres.

**13 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.

**14 Buy clothing second-hand**  
Buying clothes second hand not only saves you money but ensures that the second hand clothes you purchase have an extra long lease of life.

**15 Do a clothes swap**  
Look online for local events or get advice on how to set up your own. Take a look at sites like Get Swishing.

**16 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.

**17 Request zero plastic packaging**  
If you're buying clothes online ask the retailer if they can reduce or remove plastic packaging.

## Home

**Sunday 18 March**  
**Psalms 24:1-2**  
'The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it'.

**19 Put a "No Junk Mail" sticker on your letterbox**  
This will reduce the number of letters with plastic windows. It will also reduce your paper waste.

**20 Make it from scratch**  
Try and cook as much as possible from scratch and take your own sandwiches and snacks when you go out.

**21 Avoid wet wipes**  
These contain plastic fibres so don't break down like toilet roll, despite often being described as flushable.

**22 Acquire necessary plastic items used instead of new**  
Check second-hand shops, Freecycle or Freegle. Look for sharing groups locally.

**23 Buy second-hand plastic-free furniture**  
There's lots of advice about repairing, upcycling and finding good wooden or metal furniture online.

**24 Don't buy new CDs and DVDs**  
Stream or download music, shows, and films online or borrow them from the library or friends.

## Travel

**Sunday 25 March**  
**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.'

**26 Avoid plastic pens and giveaways**  
Try using a refillable fountain pen or pencils.

**27 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.

**28 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.

**29 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.

**Make your voice heard:**  
Share what you are doing with friends, family and community. Ask your **MP** what they are doing to tackle single use plastics. Join the UN's [Clean Seas](#) campaign and Greenpeace's [Plastic Pledge](#). Find out your [own plastic footprint](#). Call on supermarkets for a [Plastic Free Aisle](#).  
  
We hope this challenge has made you more aware of your plastic use and helped you create some lasting changes.