

How do I begin to help my planet?

by St. James' Green Team, Warrenton, Virginia

Choose one of the following and do it faithfully. Then choose a second.

- Pray. As Christians, we seek God's guidance in problems, and we act in hope, knowing we are never alone. We are never without hope.
- [Calculate your carbon footprint.](#)
- Have a family conference. The effects of climate change will be with our children and grandchildren. They need to be involved. An overwhelming situation can cause an anxiety that freezes us into inaction: simple actions, no matter how small, can help overcome that anxiety and move a solution forward.
- Stay informed. Use multiple media sources.
- Decrease your burning of fossil fuels (automobile, lawn mower, use of electricity). Each gallon of gasoline burned produces over 18 pounds of carbon dioxide. Document your driving, then intentionally decrease it. Reduce your lawn/mowing area.
- Reduce use of herbicides and pesticides. Use only native species in landscaping.
- Go meatless one day per week. If you do this already, increase it to two days.
- Avoid food waste. Composting organic matter reduces methane production in landfills.
- Call and write your legislators on the local, state and national levels. Vote. Always.
- Don't buy anything unnecessary. Give gifts of nonprofit donations, food or plants.
- Use reusable shopping and produce bags. Avoid prepackaged items in plastic.
- Buy American-made products. Not only does this provide jobs, but the item has been manufactured under EPA guidelines.
- Buy local food as much as possible, read the stickers on your grocery's fruits and vegetables. Start a garden, no matter how small.
- Recycle. Everything. Always. [Look up how to recycle an item in your area.](#)
- Electricity: What powers your power plant? Do you have options with your provider to support and use clean energy (check your monthly bill)? Reduce your consumption.
- Bump your thermostat up or down 1 degree to reduce heating/cooling use.
- Consider that, as Americans, we consume enormous amounts of the world's resources. Consider what, as Christians, we owe to the refugees of climate change. Discuss and consider a plan of action for climate refugees with your church.
- Support research in science and engineering, STEM in education.
- Do what you can to protect and increase areas of healthy forests. Trees absorb and use carbon dioxide.