

# Earth Care Corner—Plastic



Let's welcome 2023 by reminding ourselves that St. Philip is an Earth Care Congregation. Our title means that we make Earth care a priority in all that we do from planning events to the care of our building. It also means as church members that we try to take care of God's world as best we can at home, too.

One way you can help is by trying to buy less plastic which is the worst polluter in our world today. When you find yourself at the store reaching for items made of plastic, try to look for an alternative made of metal, wood, or other natural materials. It can be exciting to discover all the innovative, eco-friendly, plastic-free alternatives out there.

STOP buying single use plastic water bottles and refill your reusable water bottle with tap water instead. Not only do you help save the Earth from plastic pollution, you can [save money](#) by drinking tap water. On average, bottled water costs 4 cents per ounce. If you drink only bottled water, that adds up to around \$1,000 per year. [Compare](#) that to tap water, which costs on average 3 cents per 100 gallons, or nearly \$1 for one year's worth of drinking water. In addition, the purity standards for tap water are much higher than that of bottled water. Not purchasing bottled water is one of the easiest and cheapest ways to reduce your environmental footprint.

Remember that you've had your whole life to get used to buying plastic, and it may take some time to re-train your brain to avoid it! By slowly phasing plastic out of your life instead of expecting to be plastic-free overnight, you'll greatly increase your chances of sticking to these changes. See what YOU can do in 2023 to help take care of God's Earth.

# Earth Care Corner



## **St. Philip has been certified as a PC (USA) Earth Care Congregation since March 2020.**

This title is designed to recognize churches that commit to taking seriously God's call to care for the Earth. The goal is to inspire churches to care for God's Earth in a holistic way, by integrating Earth care into all aspects of their church life and encourage others to follow their example.

### **Examples of our earth-care projects:**

- Built our organic Community Garden which is providing food for NEED and composting food and yard waste from our community.
- Placed recycling bins in our buildings.
- Purchase compostable cups and non-plastic kitchen items.
- Educate members about ways to keep and heal creation through recycling with a focus on reducing our use of plastic.
- Celebrate God's creation with a focused annual worship service.
- Maintain and upgrade our buildings in environmentally friendly ways with a goal to conserve resources.

**St. Philip will continually work on earth care projects with the goal of renewing our certification annually.**

If you are interested in earth care projects at St. Philip, contact Ruth Lucas at [lucascr@me.com](mailto:lucascr@me.com)

# **Litany: Living in Harmony**

(Adapted from Words for the Journey for Teens by Lisa Freemantle, Les Miller & Melinda Rapallo-Ferrara)

*Leader:* May we use the world's resources we need with love, humility, and thoughtfulness, without guilt, without fear, without waste.

*All: May we live in harmony with the earth.*

May we live together with animals with which we share this planet, being careful not to harm them or their habitats.

*All: May we live in harmony with the earth.*

May we respect the life in our lakes, rivers, and oceans using them with care and being mindful in our efforts not to pollute them.

*All: May we live in harmony with the earth.*

May we learn to live within our means, by reducing our waste and continuing to reuse and recycle all that we can.

*All: May we live in harmony with the earth.*

May we plan to leave the world in a state that all future generations will be able to enjoy, ensuring that it is filled with resources and life, and kept healthy and clean.

*All: May we live in harmony with the earth.*

# Action Steps to Reduce Plastic Use

## **REDUCE, \*REFUSE, REUSE, RECYCLE.**

(\*Refuse single-use plastics like water bottles, straws, plastic bags, etc.)

- Limit plastic use and opt for either paper or biodegradable, eco-friendly products. (Say “Paper, not plastic” at the grocery store if given a choice.)
- Invest in reusable bags, cups, bottles, and household items. (Single plastic bags take 1,000 years to degrade!)
- Give up traditional gum which has rubber/plastic in it that lasts for ages after you dispose of it. Buy only natural, plant-based gum.
- Buy boxes of laundry detergent vs plastic bottles.
- Purchase foods like cereal, pasta, and rice from bulk bins and fill a reusable bag or container (you save \$\$ and unnecessary packaging!).
- Reuse containers for storing leftovers.
- Use a reusable mug or bottle for beverages, even when ordering from a to-go shop.
- Bring your own containers instead of using Styrofoam leftover boxes from restaurants.
- Use a razor with replaceable blades instead of a disposable, plastic razor.
- Buy eggs in paper cartons vs. plastic.
- Use bars of soap vs. plastic bottles of body wash, shampoo, hand soap.
- Buy compostable coffee pods for Keurig machines. (Try Tayst brand.)
- Skip balloons. (The plastic harms wildlife and takes years to degrade.)
- Buy milk in paper cartons and chips & bread in paper bags vs. plastic.
- Buy matches vs. plastic lighters.
- Educate yourself about plastic pollution and donate to charities that fight plastic pollution.

# Easy Green Actions at Home

## 1. Conserve energy

- A. Set thermostat up or down at least one degree or more, depending on the season and when the house is occupied.
- B. Turn off lights when not in use.
- C. Use economy settings on your dishwasher.
- D. Wash clothes on warm and cold vs. hot water.
- E. Lower water heater thermostat to 120 degrees.
- F. Use efficient light bulbs, like LED.

## 2. Conserve water

- A. Turn off faucet while brushing teeth, scrubbing hands, etc.
- B. Save water while washing fruits, vegetables, rice, etc. then reuse to water plants. Cool and reuse water drained from cooking noodles, etc.
- C. Have an irrigation sprinkler system evaluation for leaks. (Free through the city of Hurst)  
<https://www.mysprinklereval.com/index.php?hurst>
- D. Water lawn smartly.  
<https://waterisawesome.com/>

## 3. Ditch plastics and styrofoam

- A. Use safe, reusable food containers such as glass, silicone, or metal.
- B. Refuse to buy plastic water bottles! REFILL glass or metal bottles.
- C. Urge restaurants to use compostable or recyclable materials for their take-out meal containers.
- D. Buy paper yard waste bags vs. plastic that never fully decomposes.

## 4. Recycle paper, cans, glass, and hard and soft plastics.

(Drop soft plastics off at local grocery stores.)

## 5. Environmentally friendly lawn and garden care

- A. Use paper yard waste bags vs. plastic.
- B. Collect your **leaves** and drop off at the back of our St. Philip Community Garden for composting. (\*Not grass)
- C. Mulch your lawn while cutting the grass. (Adds nitrogen and moisture.)

D. Use organic fertilizers and pesticides vs. chemicals (poisons our water).

<https://www.thisoldhouse.com/lawns/21015220/tips-for-a-lush-organic-lawn>

E. Create an outdoor compost pile.

<https://www.lawnstarter.com/blog/lawn-care-2/composting-101-how-to-start-your-first-compost-pile/>